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[A MUTUAL RECOGNITION.]

## CHRISTINE'S REVENGE;

O'HARA'S WIFE.

### CHAPTER XXX.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind?

A MAN'S face between Elaine and the sunshine; a face which recalled the past—that bright, terrible summer at Donnamore, when her doom was upon her; when Christine mocked, and Roland—poor dead and gone Roland—hid from her, and she felt her fate creeping on her day by day, and uttered ever night the wild, wicked wish that she was dead.

Yes, a face which called up all those memories into vivid relief—the face of the young Earl of Levison. On his part the very handsome, very well-bred, very rousé noble was struck with an astonishment and a mingled pain and pleasure which blanched his cheeks and his lips, when he found himself facing the lost Elaine, ten times lovelier than of yore, and with a meaning and a pathos in her beauty which it had lacked before.

Golden head, Madonna-like face, parted lips. Where in all the schools of art should he find a beauty like hers? He had exquisite taste, this young nobleman, but he was a nobleman with all the instincts and the prejudices of his class. Elaine had been his day dream. He felt, or he fancied, that she was more to him than any

other woman under the sun; but he would now have shrunk from the idea of making her Countess of Levison and future Marchioness of Carrig Flynn; the idea of marrying the widow of a low born "scamp" like Roland O'Hara (so he judged him in his thoughts) was abhorrent to him.

He never forgot that repose of manner under all excitement which is supposed to be the distinguishing characteristic of his class. He entered the schoolroom through the open French window, and he extended his right hand cordially to Elaine, first courteously removing his cap.

"What lovely weather, is it not?" he said to her.

And he caught her hand and held it in a vice-like clasp, looking all the while very passionately into her eyes, and then he led her towards the window and stood there with her, both of them apparently gazing out upon the grass plat and the flowers.

"You are not so much surprised to see me as I am to see you," he said, hoarsely.

And Lady Elaine answered bitterly:

"Ah, you thought that I was dead!"

The bitterness was not for him; this nobleman was nothing to her; she was thinking of her proud, implacable mother, of her fair sister, of her grave, changed, estranged father.

"You—they all thought that I was dead," she said, very passionately.

"I did not," he answered, in deep, low tones; "I did not know if you were hiding yourself, or if your mother had really shut you up somewhere as report said."

"No, I escaped. You will not betray me, Lord Levison?"

"I?" He looked at her with a devouring passionateness. "I would die for you. Do you mean that you are here incog. as a governess to—people—like these—these Pennithorns?"

His tone expressed unqualified contempt.

"It is so," she answered; "my duties are light, the house is pleasant, the children love me. I am content."

"Content!" he echoed, contemptuously. "You who stepped out of your nursery into the most terrible tragedy that can make a woman's life terrible; you who only knew backboards, copybooks, schoolroom teas, and then a hideous mockery of marriage with an unutterable ruffian, after that murder, prison, death, the dread of a perpetual imprisonment to fill your thoughts. Heaven only knows what you have endured. You would not come to me."

"To you—who while my husband——"

"Hush, please; that word from your lips in connection with that ruffian quite maddens me. Ignore him; forget that he was your husband. What a mercy he is dead."

"You must not speak of him so," she said. Her tears were falling fast. "He is in his grave!"

"You never loved him," the earl said, between his shut white teeth. "It was that jade of a Frenchwoman. Tell me plainly, if she had not put it into your head, would you ever have thought of marrying O'Hara?"

The earl's face expressed the strongest contempt. Elaine felt the instincts and prejudices of her class rise within her at sight of this nobleman. She felt for the first time ashamed of the part she had played in marrying poor Roland without love; she seemed to see in a

flash what a waste and a desert this mad marriage had made of her life.

"Would you ever have married O'Hara if it had not been for the Frenchwoman?" pursued the earl.

"No, I was not in love with him, but when he went away and hid, I found that love had come into my heart. I—"

"Nothing of the kind; it was an overstrained sense of duty, nothing more. You pitied the scoundrel when he was in prison; but tell me, is it not a relief to you that he is dead, that he can never come to claim you and annoy you again?"

"Don't ask me such questions. I have wept the bitterest tears for him; I—"

"Enough."

The earl interrupted her impetuously. Was he losing the perfect courtesy towards her which had always distinguished his manners?

"Enough. I can't bear to hear you talk of that scamp. You think you must; that it is your duty because he was your husband, but you are wrong—you quite mistake your duty, which is really to forget as soon as possible—utterly to forget that such a wretch ever existed."

The earl spoke with a vehement passion which in some way moved Elaine. This man, handsome as a Greek god of Phidias, polished, elegant, manly, courageous—this man who belonged to her own class, had something the aspect of a traveller from a far off land—a land beloved by a banished exile. This exile hangs upon the traveller's words, looks in his face, and questions him of those associations and surroundings which once made life sweet to him, and which have now become but memories, and as the man tells his "news from home" the listener associates him with that past time and almost loves him for its sake.

Thus it was with Elaine. The happiest time of her life had been the sunny, prosperous days of childhood and sweet first youth. Love had never come wandering like a lost angel into this Eden of the past to lure her out into the world with his deep, mysterious wiles, his spell stronger than death. He had never painted her future with the passionate and lurid glories of his enchanted kingdom, else would all the memories of youth and home, beautiful surroundings, and parents' love have paled at once and for ever into insignificance, for love is greater than all these.

But Elaine had not married Roland for love; she had married him at the bidding of Christine. Since then, in his absence and his dangers and sufferings, she had mistaken pity and a strong yearning of wifely duty for love, but it had not been love, and now that he was dead and gone and she knew how little good the marriage had done to him, how much misery and desolation it had wrought in her life, she regretted that step whenever she thought of it, and the time was now come when she began to look back with longing to the delights of her past life, and to realise very bitterly how much she had lost. Still Elaine tried to defend the dead who had loved her.

"He was not a wretch. If we are to be friends you must not speak an ill word of him to me. He was mistaken; led away, that was all. Now he is in his grave let him sleep there peacefully; it is sacrilege to abuse the dead."

The earl smiled. He liked this tone; it was the duty tone. There was not manifested in it one pang of the heart for the lad who "slept peacefully in his grave."

"She is glad he sleeps," the earl said to himself. "She would not awaken him for the world. I have no rival in that dead rascal, and sometimes a dead rival is as provoking as a living one. Yes, let him sleep. She has never loved, this exquisite Elaine, and now she must love me. Agreed," he said, aloud, with a brilliant smile—"agreed, beautiful Elaine. We will ignore him and your sorrows altogether; but I may tell of Belgrave Square—of the earl and countess, of Clarice grown so pretty? She is to be presented at Court next year, and

the countess would be glad to see her Countess of Levison!"

"And you?" Elaine asked, quickly.

"I! There is only one woman in the universe who has ever touched my heart, and she—is not Clarice."

"Then will you tell me what they say of me?"

"They never speak of you."

The rich blood from the indignant heart flooded the fair face and white throat.

"Don't they hint that I am dead?"

"No; it is believed that you are in a convent."

"And I am here a governess at a salary of twenty-five pounds a year."

"And you mean to endure that?"

"What then would you advise?"

"I wish you to marry me," he answered, impetuously, and then his shrinking pride stung him to the quick, and he said: "You will have your estate in one year. You must go to a lawyer, assert your identity, and claim it."

The lovely widow shook her head.

"No, my mother will take it."

"You silly child; she has no more power to deprive you of it than I have. You must assert your claim, and then we will go together and announce our marriage, and take possession of it."

She looked at him with wonder-filled blue eyes.

"I did not know. I thought I must be a governess and toil hard all my life long unless I met and loved and married somebody."

She sighed softly but deeply. She had been dreaming a little lately of someone, she knew not whom—someone whom she could love in the mysterious future, and she had felt a certainty that this would come about; that flowers would yet spring at her feet; spread out their green bows; the birds sing overhead, while she would hear the music of fountains and gather the roses of love. Was it to be this handsome hero whom she had hitherto never cared for? Would she love him now? Perhaps there was no such love in the world, after all, as she had dreamed of, or at least there was no such love in her heart. Most likely never would be. No, she felt sure of it now. She never could love anybody as she had once dreamed of loving. Had not Mattelle always called her "that cold child, Elaine?" But to have a protector—to take her place again in the sphere which was hers of right—to be gracious and condescending as the Countess of Levison—who would dare then to allude to that miserable, miserable past?

How truly the earl must love her to be willing to forget the mad marriage, the flight from home, the birth of the boy. When she thought of beautiful baby Lionel she started. That child was dearer to her than her life. To be as much separated from him as she was now compelled to be was the greatest sorrow of her existence.

What would the earl say about the baby? and did he know of his birth? And something cowardly and weak came over her and prevented her from telling the earl she was the mother of Roland's child.

Meanwhile the little pupils had begun to chatter, first in whispers, next in the treble tones of childhood. Anon, finding their pretty Mrs. Anderson still talking to the strange gentleman so earnestly that she did not heed them, they began to run about the room and to shout at the top of their little voices. And then suddenly the door opened, and Mrs. Pennithorn entered.

She was a lively brunette, with dancing black eyes, very pink cheeks, and very white teeth. She was about eight-and-twenty years old, was petite in form, but with well-defined bust and waist.

She was dressed like a fashion plate of the current month. She wore a costly gold necklet and a large diamond locket. Diamonds were in her ears. Her elderly husband denied her nothing.

Mrs. Pennithorn talked very fast. She was under the impression that she was of regal beauty. She was a very good-natured woman

unless she suspected a rival. But if that were the case it seemed at once as if some evil fairy had transformed the laughing Hebe into a Hecate.

Mrs. Pennithorn was so much wrapped up in the contemplation of her own charms, and so much enraptured with her own manifold fascinations, that one fact had never impressed itself upon her preoccupied mind: the significant fact that her little widowed governess, Mrs. Anderson, was gifted with the very rarest loveliness that can fall to the share of mortal woman.

Elaine was so poor, dressed herself so cheaply and so simply, occupied herself so completely with her pupils and with occasional visits to her child, ignored the idea of flirting or attracting attention so thoroughly, that Mrs. Pennithorn hardly knew if her governess were fair or dark, seventeen or thirty-seven years old.

But now what sight met the eyes of this merchant's wife, who was one of the vainest, most arrogant little fiends in Christendom. Her governess standing in the recess of the window, positively absorbed in conversation with the Earl of Levison.

Now, Mrs. Pennithorn was a desperate coquette—a somewhat shameless flirt. She was accustomed to try to "cut out" single young ladies at all the balls, soirées, garden-parties, dinner-parties, or picnics which she attended. Her life was one round of pleasure. She generally did manage to steal the attentions and sometimes even the hearts of the gay or sentimental young bachelors who made the life and attraction of these parties for her.

Hitherto she had never lost her own heart—supposing her to have one. She laughed at what she called the spoony speeches of the sentimental youths, and repeated them gleefully to girls who were dying for the sakes of the said youths. She giggled and triumphed, gave garden-parties, picnics, and little dinners, and people all said "there was no harm in her."

Possibly there was nothing more than inordinate vanity and self love, which must be distinguished from selfishness, because Mrs. Pennithorn really liked to make things pleasant for all the people in her house, her husband and children included, so long as her pet diversions were not interfered with.

She had met Lord Levison at a large mixed ball the week before, a ball, that is, where merchants and their wives and daughters met with a sprinkling of noblemen. Very few, if any, of the female aristocracy had been present. When we say a mixed ball we wish to have it understood that nobody beneath the social rank of the leading professions was present; but the nobles were few and far between, as the raisins in a plain school cake destined to delight the charity children of some country village.

At this ball the earl seemed to fall fifty fathoms deep in love with the pretty little woman. On her part, she was in a perfect flutter of delight. She was frantic with joy. She admired the handsome nobleman so much that she forgot, for the first time in her life, to ask herself how much he admired her. She had hardly slept since she had met him. She had dreamed of him when she did sleep. She had been, of all things, impatient for this Thursday to arrive, because the earl was coming to escort her to a water-party on the Thames as far as Maidenhead.

They were to sup by moonlight in the woods while a hand played. The party was, he assured her, very agreeable. Two or three ladies of title were to be present, and half the officers of a crack regiment. The earl was to bring his carriage for the lady and her friend, a dull, good-natured old widow who lived with Mrs. Pennithorn as factotum.

They were to drive from Sydenham to Paddington, take the train to Maidenhead, and then embark and float up the river to the wood where the night picnic was to be held. That the earl should call at the Beeches, walk over the lawn, enter the schoolroom, and flirt with the governess, seemed as monstrous a proceeding to Mrs. Pennithorn as if he had tossed one of her fair-haired children into the pool at the end of the shrubbery.



She stood aghast, while her noisy offspring gambolled and screamed with delight at the utmost pitch of their voices, then she rushed forward, seized the second girl and boxed her ears with all her force.

The child stared up into the angry, distorted face of her usually merry and good-humoured mother, positively too much afraid to cry, too much surprised to feel the pain of the severe blows.

Elaine was at a loss to account for Mrs. Pennithorn's rage. She had never studied the characteristics of her employer, and she had seen too little of her flirting to take notice of it. It was all done in an amiable manner, with the giggling joyousness of a schoolgirl, but then hitherto this lady's heart had never been touched.

Elaine advanced, pale, with something like alarm in her large blue eyes, towards Mrs. Pennithorn. She did not speak; she left the initiative to that lady.

"This is nice discipline—a ladylike example to set your pupils, Mrs. Anderson. I really would not have believed such a thing if anybody had told me."

The earl advanced with the most perfect sang-froid of manner; he was in truth one of the most dissipated young men in England. He who made women and their ways his study; he who had set his mind on making a conquest of Mrs. Pennithorn; he who considered such women fair game, took in the whole situation at a glance, sounded the depth of Mrs. Pennithorn's feelings, and laughed in his sleeve to find the game so nearly won. Not a smile crossed the handsome lip. He bowed, then held out his hand to Mrs. Pennithorn. She could hardly manage to give him hers; she was so angry with him. Then he smiled.

"The carriage is waiting," he said, in low, musical tones. "I am glad you are punctual."

"How did you find your way here, Lord Levison? You never were here before."

"I thought the grounds looked so charming. I ventured to stroll round them instead of knocking at the door, in hopes of meeting you," which was so far true.

"And Mrs. Anderson, you seem to be rather quicker in making acquaintance with strangers than—than I like," stammered Mrs. Pennithorn, for the cold, beautiful eyes of the earl were fixed upon her. Then to Elaine: "You really should not allow the children to romp in school hours, Mrs. Anderson."

"My fault!" said the earl. "Mrs. Anderson is an old acquaintance of mine. I knew her as a child."

But Mrs. Pennithorn looked as if she did not believe this. The earl's reputation as a lady-killer was not unknown to her, and she said to herself "that Mrs. Anderson was a 'baggage'."

"Dear me, how very strange," said Mrs. Pennithorn, incredulously.

"Yes, life is full of these strange coincidences," said the earl. "Mrs. Anderson was hardly glad to see me at first. I have been scolding her for being silly and whimpering over her dead husband. He was as I told her a scamp."

"How very extraordinary," said Mrs. Pennithorn.

"Life is full of extraordinary things," said the earl.

"Yes, but I don't believe in these strange things," said Mrs. Pennithorn. "I don't believe them, my lord."

"That is a pity," the earl said, coolly. To himself he whispered: "What a little vicious cat! How different to the moonlight charm and delicate loveliness of yonder pearl Elaine—a pantomime fairy, and one of Giorgione's Madonnas!"

"Well, if you can tear yourself away, Lord Levison, from your charming friend, perhaps you will come with me and take lunch before we start?"

The earl's eyes spoke volumes to Elaine. What wonder if in her sad isolation she clung to him and to the hope of seeing him again as the shipwrecked cling to a rock while they look

round the dark horizon for a sail. He clasped her hand tenderly.

"Heaven bless you, darling, my promised wife!" he murmured.

Then he went away with that gorgeous butterfly, Mrs. Pennithorn, whose beautiful wings were already singed in the fierce, cruel light of the earl's dazzling fascinations. Long before the day was over he had told her a fictitious little story about Elaine, which she thoroughly believed, and had even made her promise to "be kind" to the pretty little widow.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

Jealousy has turned his blood to gall;  
Murder lurks in his heart of hearts.

WHATEVER the fictitious story was coquettish, pretty Mrs. Pennithorn thoroughly believed it, for a time at least. Nor did she regard the beautiful governess for the space of the next three weeks in any other light than that of a young orphan daughter of some country clergyman, whose small living had been located on one of the earl's estates, and at whose death the poor girl had married a scamp, who drank himself to death and left the wife penniless. Mrs. Pennithorn was so frantically happy during these weeks, when the earl singled her out as the object of his devoted attention at all the garden parties and evening parties which made Sydenham Hill gay that bright summer, that she forgot to be jealous of Elaine. Indeed, the gay ear was diplomatic enough to appear to treat the governess with a merely patronising indifference.

Lady Elaine herself was too anxious to conceal the sad events of her past life to resent his apparent neglect, besides, there was that true love absent from her heart the love which would have produced jealousy. So things went on smoothly for a little while. The earl, who belonged to the very *crème de la crème* of the aristocracy, whose name was frequently in the Court news, whose father was in the Cabinet—the earl we say, could not appear at this round of Sydenham gaieties without exciting much remark and boundless admiration from the ladies.

Mr. Pennithorn, good, easy man, was perfectly confident that his joyous, brilliant wife was the most innocent-hearted creature in the whole world. He liked to know that people admired her. He never thought of guilty love or base intrigue. Perhaps Rosamond Pennithorn never thought of either any more than did her elderly and grey-haired husband.

She thought the earl was a demigod from another sphere. She began by desiring that he should worship her. She ended by being in great danger of worshipping him.

It was a lovely August night. The moon sailed in a heaven cloudless as the purple skies of Italy. There was a faint and fitful breeze which stirred the tall elms at the end of the lawn, and wafted the sweet scent of the white and crimson roses which grew in a thicket on the left side of the garden through the open French windows of the drawing-room at the Beeches.

It was an elegant room, furnished in the sombre rich taste of the day. The splendid carpet had ovals and arabesques of pale blue and curling snakes of gold twining in and out through the intricate pattern. All this brightness relieved the gloom of the exquisitely carved high-backed chairs, upholstered in the darkest satin, and the cabinets of ebony, and tables of the same.

Mr. Pennithorn slumbered in a low, luxurious velvet chair. Mrs. Pennithorn stood with the earl at the open window, and looked at the smooth lawn, the gentle waving elms, and then above them, towards the pure fair queen of night in the cloudless heaven.

Mrs. Pennithorn wore white; white suited her brunette tinting and high colouring; her dress was of gauzy material, for the night was hot. In her dark hair was a scarlet eastern

flower fresh gathered from the hothouse. A large carbuncle glowed at her throat as a pendant from her gold necklet. At her waist was another rich red flower.

The earl had dined that evening with the Pennithorns. Had Rosamond only known how little the spell of her dark eyes had to do with keeping him in town in August when all his world had flown to the Alps or the Rhine or the Italian lakes or the German baths, she would have been simply furious. As it was her heart beat fast. She smiled and sighed, and said, softly:

"Yes; I married far too young. It was a terrible sacrifice."

So the earl sighed also.

"I was only nineteen," went on Mrs. Pennithorn, "and my husband there was forty-nine."

"May and December," said the earl.

He was obliged to say something; he was the most fickle of men, and he was actually at this time very much bored by Mrs. Pennithorn.

If he had known what a poor scrambling, out-at-elbows family the good merchant had married Rosamond from; had he known of the makeshifts and the debts, the scanty stock of dresses among five girls, the meagre, tasteless meals to which she had been accustomed, the bickerings and roughness, the rude squabbles and petty meannesses born of poverty, which had been present with the pretty, black-eyed girl as her daily bread during all those years, from her birth to the age of nineteen, he might and would have been disgusted at her ingratitude towards the gentle, grey-haired husband who slumbered in the armchair, and whose wealth, generosity and kindness had surrounded her with comforts, luxuries, and pleasures. As it was, being obliged to say something, the earl went on:

"You are like fire and snow with your crimson jewel and flowers and pure, white robe. I shall call you the fire fairy."

She laughed and was as delighted as a mad-cap schoolgirl who is promised a holiday. All the while the earl was saying to himself:

"How shall I see Elaine before I go. She sits, sweet soul, in her solitary schoolroom by her solitary lamp reading most likely, or thinking. I wonder when I shall be able to arrange our marriage; I wish it now to be soon, but secret until—until it is announced."

"How I should enjoy a stroll by moonlight?" said Mrs. Pennithorn, "after the heat of the day."

And she sighed.

"Well," said the earl, "it remains with you to gratify that wish, but you must have a shawl."

"My black lace shawl is on that chair," said the lady of the Beeches, languidly.

The earl went as in duty bound, brought the shawl, and wrapped it round the shoulders of Rosamond, and then the two stepped out upon the grass, and walked towards the belt of elm trees.

"We might go into the shrubberies and on to the lane at the back," suggested Mrs. Pennithorn.

The earl was very silent and abstracted. She wished to make him speak, but he only answered her remarks as shortly and in as few words as possible.

"There is a cottage at the end of this lane," she said, "where Mrs. Anderson's baby boy is out at nurse. It's a pretty cottage, all grown over with ivy, and—"

"What!" thundered the earl.

He was off his guard. During the few and brief interviews he had had with Elaine since meeting her at the Beeches, she had shrunk, held back by she knew not what cowardly instinct, from telling him about her boy, and as for Mrs. Pennithorn, it was by the rarest chance that she ever alluded to her governess at all. She only had done so now for the sake of something to say.

The earl skouted "What," and then was ashamed of the emotion he had displayed. He tried to cover his confusion with a laugh.

"I was so surprised," he said; "I did not

know she was possessed of that sublime treasure—a child." To himself he said, with a shudder: "A Fenian's brat; the wretched whelp of a low-born scamp like O'Hara. I did not know it. The cub ought to be strangled. I must tell her to put it away for ever."

"It's a very handsome boy," said Mrs. Pennithorn, "with dark eyes. The father must have been handsome, for I don't consider there is anything at all striking about Mrs. Anderson, do you?"

"Not in the least," the earl answered, with a forced laugh.

"I declare I think I see her in front of us. Yes, in a white dress; she is gone to see her boy herself, asleep. She often does run down there of a night."

"Oh, that this confounded woman were gone," the earl said to himself; "then I would go on and tell Elaine what a blight this cub will be to us both, and that she must put it away for ever when she marries me."

"We will just go on in sight of the cottage, and then we'll turn back," said Mrs. Pennithorn.

The earl was in a very terrible excitement. He loved madly this fair Elaine, destined for him from her cradle, who had eluded him, been deaf to his fervent vows, given herself to a low-born peasant, and passed for a time completely out of his life path.

He now found her again, lovelier than ever, free of the peasant husband, softened, subdued, more lovable than ever, and ready, he believed, to love him. He had resolved upon what he thought the great sacrifice of marrying O'Hara's widow, and presenting her to the world the loveliest countess who ever wore diamonds. And now he finds there is a child—a boy, who will be pointed at as his stepson all through his life. O'Hara's son. The idea was madness.

"Let us turn, please," he said, abruptly to the vain, fluttering woman at his side. "I feel faint—ill. I wonder if you could give me a bed to-night at the Beeches?"

Mrs. Pennithorn fairly screamed with delight at the thought of the earl a guest in the house. The earl at breakfast; the earl perhaps all day to-morrow; the Princeleys, the rich bankers, whose big mansion lay on the other side of the road—the Princeleys should know this.

So the earl and the lady returned to the house, and in the drawing-room, still complaining of illness, he partook of coffee with cognac. Very soon after he was shown to a sumptuous room, and left alone for the night. Lord Levison was not ill, only anxious for an opportunity of meeting Elaine alone.

Instinct told him that the young mother would be off betimes to see her child. He arose at six, took a bath, dressed, and found his way in the glorious sunshine to the lane, and soon he was outside the ivy clad cottage where the child of Elaine was at nurse.

It was a picturesque little place; the lodge of a great house; the door stood ajar; he heard from within the joyful crowing of a child and the answering voice of a woman sweeter in his ears than any other music on earth, and he anathematised the creature to whom the words breathing of love and tenderness were addressed.

"My darling! my own! how beautiful he looks in his bath, like a cherub from heaven!"

Then the earl heard the splashing of water and the repeated joyful crowing of the child. Elaine had come down to the lodge to bath her child before sitting down to the schoolroom breakfast with her pupils.

The earl waited a few moments; gave Elaine time to dress her child and then went suddenly into the kitchen of the cottage. Elaine, in white morning robe, made with care and elegance, looked like a Madonna, with the child in her arms. Truly the child was beautiful as a cherub out of heaven. He was eighteen months old or so, and could run alone, but he clung to his mother's neck and nestled his sweet shy face on her shoulder. He had great, dark, glistening eyes and the loveliest peach bloom cheeks and lips; little dimpled

arms and hands; fair hair curling all over his head.

"Go way; go way, man!" said Roland's son, angrily, to the earl, when he saw him approaching his mother.

And the earl stopped short on the threshold. He was livid with wrath and excitement. Elaine had none of the coquettish tact of ordinary worldly women. She could not smile as if nothing was the matter and address the earl with the ease and careless courtesy of a woman of the great world. Her troubles had come upon her before she had left the schoolroom; before she had learnt to hide her countenance under a mask; and to smile while a serpent was stinging her to the heart. She was pale as a stately garden lily. She advanced towards the earl gravely and without smiling, extending her hand. He took it, and said, hoarsely:

"Presently will you speak to me?"

The eighteen months' child doubled its fist and shook it at the earl.

"Man! go away!" he said.

Mrs. Simons, the kind nurse and mistress of the cottage, understood the baby syllables; so did Elaine. The earl did not, but he knew the child hated the sight of him, and a cruel rage against the baby burnt at his heart.

"I will," Elaine answered; "but first let me carry this boy into the next room with Mrs. Simons. If he does not see you he will not cry when I leave him."

She took the child away and then returned, put on a shady hat, and strolled with the earl along the lane away from the direction of the Beeches.

"You have promised to be my wife—to become Countess of Levison," the earl said, in a trembling voice.

"Yes," she answered.

"You never told me you had a child of that scoundrel's to call you mother."

She flushed crimson.

"Pardon me; I shrink from telling you. I am a coward, but if Lionel will make you regret your plan for our future—oh, you know you are not bound!"

"You could give me up without a pang?" he said, bitterly. "I that have loved and still love you more than my life, Elaine. You must be my wife, but that child—"

"What of him?" Elaine asked.

"You must put him away into some institution, and never see him or claim him again."

Elaine broke into a laugh; a little, wild, musical laugh, which thrilled her lover with a strange sense of pain.

"Never see him again—my child? who is more to me than all I have lost, wealth, rank, home, everything. My child? whose baby hands dragged me back from the brink of destruction and the madness of despair? My child, for whose sake alone I have lived? Lord Levison, is this your love for me?"

"It must be one thing or the other," he said, with a savage scowl that made his blonde beauty lurid as a thundercloud which the blood red sunset touches.

"You must choose between O'Hara's brat and me."

"My choice is made," she said, distinctly and firmly. "At once and for ever I choose my child!"

(To be Continued.)

## MISTAKEN ZEAL.

WE recently read of a young sewing girl who contrived, by denying herself of everything but the bare necessities of life to contribute liberally to a fund for the erection of a church edifice; and for this act of self-denial she was extravagantly praised. Now I question whether she ought not to be severely censured for such a course of conduct. Girls who support themselves by taking in sewing do not fare at all sumptuously if they have work all the year round (which is of rare occurrence) and when

they expend all of their meagre earnings on themselves.

To say of a girl of this class that she confines her expenditures to "bare necessities" means that she lives on bread and tea, goes without proper underclothing, and denies herself the comfortable wrap which she needs to protect her from cold and storms. She moreover leaves herself without any reserve fund, and when work is slack, or when it stops altogether, how is she to subsist? If sickness overtakes her she is compelled to go to the hospital and add one more to the host who, through ignorance, vice and indolence, have become burdens on the public. Burdens which you, my thrifty friends, are taxed to support.

It is the self-respecting, self-denying and frugal in the community who are taxed for the maintenance of hospitals, prisons and almshouses. Has anyone a right to increase the pauper classes? Surely this is a case of mistaken zeal.—Ed.]

## OUR TARS.

Old England's tars, whose deeds are sung,

And made in every home a toast;  
Throughout the world their praise has rung,

Until they are our pride and boast.  
They never shirk their duty, lads, but are there and ready,

In a minute.  
Whenever lives are to be saved—when danger's to be braved,  
Our tars are always in it.

Though tender-hearted as a child,  
You will always find Jack staunch and steady;

When with some fair one's smile beguiled,  
To join the sport he's always ready.

The song and dance is his delight, and he will surely first begin it;  
Whenever mischief leads the way; when fun and frolic holds its sway,

Our tars are always in it.

But when stern war calls him away,  
He cheerfully joins his ship and duty;  
His only wish is for fair play,

He sighs no more for home or beauty.  
But bravely goes to meet the foe, to fight old England's

Cause and win it.  
Whenever gallant deeds are done—when ever honour's to be won,  
Our tars are always in it. O. P.

A SPIRITED attempt is being made to revive the ancient prestige of boxing. An association of "noblemen and gentlemen" has, we are told, been formed, with the express object of once again rehabilitating the old glories of what used to be called "fistic arena."

A BARRISTER, recently compelled to apologise to a judge, expressed himself thus:—"Your honour is right and I am wrong, as your honour generally is." There was a dazed look in the judge's eye, and he hardly knew whether to feel happy or to fine the lawyer for contempt of court.

MILITARY men, or at any rate many of them, say that they believe the Zulu war will last for at least two years, and contend that we shall find it a most difficult matter to undertake the offensive, even with the additional force which will shortly be at our disposal. In a letter from Dr. Chute, he states that King Cetewayo had at least 80,000 men under arms, and that when they were finished there were plenty more to draw reinforcements from. There was, of course, a good deal of alarm in the Colony, but Colonel Pearson's latest victory may have had the effect of renewing the confidence of the natives in our military power.





[FOR LOVE'S SAKE.]

## FRANK BERTRAM'S WIFE;

OR,

## Love at First Sight.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook Him," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## HEAD AND HEART AT WAR.

An honest tale speeds best, being plainly told.

SHAKESPEARE.

We left Charles Stuart and Muriel in the first hour of their engagement confronted by Mrs. Bertram, her face a mixture of anger, indignation and surprise, as she asked:

"Mr. Stuart, what is the meaning of this?"

Still holding Muriel's hand with a re-assuring presence, the lawyer answered:

"It means that I love Miss Lestrangle, and that among many other kindnesses, I owe to you my acquaintance with my future wife."

"Your future wife?" as though she had not heard aright.

"Yes. As an old friend of mine and a very kind one of hers, will you not wish us happiness, Mrs. Bertram?"

"But why was I told nothing about it? For an affair of this kind to go on under my own roof and me to know nothing about it is a deliberate insult," not at all appeased.

"Nothing was going on," replied Charles Stuart, firmly; "until Miss Lestrangle told me she was about to leave the Knoll I had never spoken to her of my hopes."

"Dear Mrs. Bertram," pleaded Muriel, "won't you believe I never meant to deceive you?"

Indeed I did not know anything till this morning."

And the girl slipped from Stuart's side, and going up to the old lady, raised her sweet wild-rose face with an entreaty for kindness few could have withstood.

Mrs. Bertram did not attempt to withstand it; she yielded at once, conscious perhaps she had treated the girl but coolly the last few days. Kissing Muriel's forehead, she said, earnestly:

"My dear child, I hope you will be very happy, only I am very much surprised; it takes old people like me a little time to get used to things, you know."

"Is she not a treasure, Mrs. Bertram?" asked the lover, when Muriel had made her escape. "Do you not think I am very fortunate?"

"You have not got her guardian's consent yet," said the lady, drily, "and I fancy it will be no easy matter to obtain it."

"Why not?" asked the gentleman, surprised. "Frank told me something of her history. These people at Clapham cannot really care much about her."

"I don't like Mr. Stubbs," returned Mrs. Bertram, with a woman's logic; "he may be a very good man in his way, but I should prefer a little more heart and a great deal less praying. I think it would be pleasant for his wife."

"You must have some reason for thinking he would object to me," persisted Mr. Stuart. "I can provide for Muriel liberally. I love her with all my heart. He surely does not expect to keep her shut up for ever; if he did he would not have let her come here."

"That is very true," admitted the lady of the Knoll, "but Mr. Stubbs has known our family for years. He has (though I do not like to mention this) received a great deal of kindness at our hands, and, don't be offended, there is one reason why he would peculiarly object to you as a nephew-in-law."

"Pray let me hear it. I promise beforehand to take no offence."

"The one antipathy of his life, his great hatred, is for the stage and everything connected

with it. Now, it is a public fact that Charles Stuart, of Blyth Hall, is the popular dramatist, Charles Arnold, Mr. Stubbs will be prepared to detest you before seeing you."

"Is he a little touched here?" And Charles touched his forehead significantly.

"Not the least in the world. Long ago he was in love with Muriel's mother—so I heard—and she refused him to marry an actor. He never forgave her, and when years after he married her sister, he completely separated his wife from the Lestranges."

"Did you know Mr. and Mrs. Lestrangle?"

"I never saw either of them. I fancy he died long ago. Mrs. Lestrangle wrote, on her death-bed, to the Stubbs to give Muriel a home, and I suppose they could not well keep at enmity with the dead, for they yielded, and there she lived from fifteen to seventeen—two dreary years."

"You have been very good to her, Mrs. Bertram. Muriel says you are the kindest friend she has ever known."

"And I haven't been very kind lately," said the warm-hearted old lady, penitently. "I have been so vexed and disappointed. Oh, Mr. Stuart, do you think my boy will ever give up his roving, aimless life and settle down?"

"I am quite sure Frank will always be a son you may be proud of," was the doubtful answer.

"Ah, yes; but if he would only do something! The Knoll used to be the gayest house in Devonshire. His father kept the hounds, but Frank doesn't care for hunting. He hates balls, and doesn't like politics; in fact it seems to me he never cares for anything."

"But think what a noble fellow he is. He has given you not an hour's anxiety in his life."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Stuart, many's the night I have lain awake picturing him murdered by Greek brigands, or drowned, or killed in a railway accident. He'll never live to a good old age, and he is the last of the line. If he would only marry!"

"Perhaps when he sees how happy Muriel

and I are, he will follow our example," said Charles, cunningly, bringing back the conversation to his own affairs. "Mrs. Bertram, will you help me in my mission to Mr. Stubbs?"

"Muriel is going home on Monday. I should wait till then," answered the old lady, flattered at being appealed to. "I could write you a letter of introduction, if you liked. But how will you manage about your foot?"

"Well, it is much better, and a slight limp may appeal to his stony feelings. Frank will think we're deserting him, for I'm afraid I shall not be able to go shooting now."

"Frank has been gone nearly two months," said the mother, a little irritably; "I can't think what he finds so interesting in Norfolk. I think I shall write and tell him he must come home, as something important has taken place; that would be sure to bring him."

"I'm afraid he would not think my difficulties with Mr. Stubbs sufficient cause."

"The agent is worrying me about one of the farms. He really ought to see to it. Yes, I shall send for Frank. Perhaps when he sees you and Muriel, he may understand what happens he has thrown away."

"The conceit of mothers," mused Charles, when she had left him. "I believe Mrs. Bertram thinks firmly Frank could have had my Muriel for the asking."

Frank Bertram received the summons one day later than he ought to have done, owing to his friends believing him in Norfolk. Really alarmed at the vague missive, he started at once, and travelling express, reached the Knoll by twelve o'clock. On his inquiries he heard his mother and Miss Lestrange had driven out. Mr. Stuart was at home, and Frank, chafing at what he termed his foolish journey, entered the library in, be it confessed, a decidedly bad temper.

"Really!" he exclaimed, as soon as the greetings were over, "my mother should be careful. She sends word I am wanted on urgent business, and when I arrive she's gone out for a drive. I come at the utmost inconvenience to myself, and this is what I find."

"You took your time about it," observed Charles, rather amused at his friend's vehemence. "We expected you all day yesterday."

"I only got the letter this morning at eight o'clock."

"And came on from Norfolk. How did you manage it?"

"I wasn't in Norfolk. I have been in town more than a week on business."

"Well, you might have let us know. When you did not come yesterday, Mrs. Bertram and Muriel worked themselves into a fever of anxiety."

"And Muriel," repeated Frank; "things seem to have altered between you two."

"We two are going to be one," laughed Stuart, awkwardly; "and though you are supposed to be sent for about a farm, I believe Mrs. Bertram's secret hope is that at the sight of our felicity you may get envious, and straightway provide the Knoll with a mistress."

"And so you are really engaged? Little Muriel going to be married; how strange it seems."

"Doesn't it, that she should have such bad taste."

"I didn't mean that." Frank wrung his friend's hand. "If ever two people were happy, you will be; I think you are made for each other."

"But we haven't got each other yet," said Charles, with comic despair; "there's a dreadful uncle and a pious aunt to be got over first, and as these dear relations have a great abhorrence for everything connected with the stage, I don't fancy they'll receive the author of *Mona Gramme* very kindly as a prospective nephew-in-law."

"Why can't you be married down here? You've both resided in the parish more than three weeks. I'll be best man, and mother shall give Muriel away."

Mr. Stuart shook his head.

"It wouldn't be legal, you know, if they objected afterwards. No, I must take the fortress

by storm and ingratiate myself with Mr. and Mrs. Stubbs. Frank, you've been in many lands and seen many manners. Tell me what is the best way of overcoming people's scruples."

Bertram shook his head.

"I'm afraid you'll have a hard time of it. Perhaps, if you went to chapel every Sunday for a year and kept awake, they might think of it."

"I mean to be married in three months. Muriel will be eighteen in January, and we mean to be married on her birthday."

"May I ask how long you have been engaged?"

"Three days."

"You make your arrangements pretty quickly, it seems to me."

"Muriel goes home on Monday, so we haven't much time to spare. To-day's Thursday."

"And supposing you find Mr. and Mrs. Stubbs desirous of exercising the part of stern guardians, what then?"

"Then I must find out if they really are her guardians. Though they have given her a home that does not in itself give them a claim. But I think they'll hear reason."

"I hope they will."

"And so you have been in London? I never care for town much in October. There's hardly anyone about, and most of the theatres are closed."

"That last is no misfortune to me," said Frank, hastily. "I have often wished lately I could abolish theatres off the face of the earth."

"Good gracious! spare my feelings. Remember, pray, you're speaking to a humble member of the society of dramatic authors. Where would our bread and cheese come from if your wish were realised?"

"Of course it sounds absurd to you, but it is real enough to me."

"You look bothered, Frank. I have been so selfishly full of my own concerns that I never asked you what business brought you to town. Nothing unpleasant, I hope?"

"Oh, no."

"Did you have good sport in Norfolk? Mrs. Bertram rather expected a hamper of game."

"Charles," said Frank, suddenly, "I can't fence with you. We are friends of two old standing for that. I haven't been near Norfolk. Respect my confidence."

"It's safe enough with me, old fellow. To tell you the truth, I suspected something of the sort. How very convenient my accident was! You must begin to think it as great a boon as I do."

"I never think at all. I am too much worried."

"What on earth's the matter? Is it money?"

"I wish money was at the bottom of the sea. I believe I could live on next to nothing. I never spend half my income."

"It seems to me, Frank, you wish everything at the bottom of the sea. Cheer up, old fellow. I'm not going to force myself into your confidence, but let me tell you there's nothing so desperately bad it can't be remedied."

"I suppose not. The fact is, Stuart, I hate a fuss. Life has gone so smoothly with me I dread any bother. I am very fond of my mother, and I don't want an estrangement from her."

"I can't make you out. Nothing in the world, I should say, would estrange you and Mrs. Bertram. As to bother, no man's life can be all sunshine, Frank."

"Ay, I know it."

"For the rest," went on Charles Stuart, "we have stood together in a great deal, Frank. Won't you let me hear you out in this trouble? Whatever it is, head and heart are at your service."

"I know it, Charles. If I ever confide in anyone it will be you; only just now there seems nothing to confide. My head and heart are at war with each other, that is all."

"Then, I understand," replied Stuart, gently. "Your trouble is not money or cards or horses—three great causes of woe—but one worse than all—a woman? Am I right?"

And Frank Bertram answered nothing.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### REJECTED LOVE.

Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned.  
CONGREVE.

BEATRICE GREY had quite made up her own mind that Percy Ashley would call the morning after receiving her note. She could not settle to her usual occupations, but moved about the house like an uneasy, restless spirit.

Outward peace prevailed between her and Mrs. Stone, who did not quite despair of earning the handsome cheque. The widow had received another letter from her new employer, stating that he should call in the afternoon and pointedly requesting that she would take care not to be at Myrtle Villa on his arrival. Wondering much, Mrs. Stone nevertheless promised in her own mind implicit obedience.

The morning passed without the expected visit. Beatrice began to think her chilly note had cooled Mr. Percy's desire of seeing her. When Mrs. Stone came down in her walking things, she made no demur at being left alone, yet no sooner was the chaperone out of sight, than the girl felt she would have given worlds to recall her.

If Mr. Ashley came she was practically alone. One of her servants was away on a holiday, the other, a young girl, was not much to be depended on.

"How absurd I am," murmured Beatrice to herself; "if Mr. Percy Ashley had been coming, he would have been here before this, and even if he does come, what harm can he do me. He cannot make me write anything against my own will. I can hardly stand; I am all of a tremble. I cannot think what has upset me."

She drank a glass of wine, sent the servant upstairs to fetch a warm shawl, then reclining on the sofa well wrapped up, she hoped she might sleep off her nervous alarm. Vain hope. She had hardly settled herself when a knock sounded and Jane ushered in Mr. Percy Ashley. We have said before he was a handsome man. He had never looked better than this on that October afternoon.

Every feature of his well cut face was full of a set purpose; and his large blue eyes—I never trust a man with blue eyes—were almost feverishly bright. He meant this visit to settle everything. If he failed to gain his own ends, it must be war to the knife between him and Beatrice.

She rose to receive him, outwardly calm, despite her sinking heart. He looked at her attentively, and wondered what new beauty had come to her face since they had last met. It seemed to him there was more of the woman and less of the spirit about it.

"I am very sorry for the cause that has brought you here," began Beatrice, gently; "I was quite hoping your brother's illness was not serious. I had no idea danger was anticipated."

"Danger was only anticipated in the last twenty-four hours. There was only just time for him to settle his affairs. Poor George."

"He was a kind friend to me," said Beatrice, imprudently; "I shall miss him bitterly."

"There is no cause for you to do so. I am more than ready to fill his place," came the quick reply.

"You could hardly do that," coldly. "When I was poor and unknown, your brother gave me an engagement at his theatre, and helped me on by encouragement and kind advice."

"Any man in his place would have done as much; I would have done more. Had I been he, Beatrice, I would have given you love; I would have made your life one dream of happiness; I would have helped you in your art; I would have been your lover, your protector."

"I can protect myself," returned Beatrice, proudly. "Mr. Ashley, may I remind you that this is a business interview."

He smiled bitterly.

"Do you wish to be rid of me already?"

She would not notice his question.



"I can guess perfectly what you came to tell me. You wished to remind me that my contract with your brother not having been properly drawn out and signed, I am no longer a member of the company of the New Theatre. I quite agree with this, only the communication could have been made in writing, and thus have spared us both this interview."

"You are altogether wrong," replied Percy, fiercely; "you take a delight in representing me at my worst. So far from your not being one of my company, my strongest wish is that you should still be at its head. I have brought the contract drawn out with me. Your signature only is needed."

"And is this haste seemingly while your brother is lying dead?"

"The theatre must open in ten days. I cannot neglect the living for the dead. I was fond of poor George, very fond, but what good would it do him for me to shut myself up and let things go as they would?"

"That is not for me to answer," replied Beatrice, firmly. "All I have to do is to decline the honour you have offered me. I shall never appear at the New Theatre again."

"And why not?"

"My reasons are my own."

"I have a right to know. Do you know you are treating me as if I were a dog? I won't stand it, Beatrice."

Her face flushed; she pointed to the door.

"Our business is at an end. If you will persist in forgetting the respect due to me in my own house I must ask you to leave me. Go!"

"I have no wish to show you anything but respect. What have I done, Beatrice?"

"I am Miss Grey to strangers, if you please. Once more, will you leave this room, or shall I?"

"Neither just yet," he answered, coolly. Then, as she turned towards the door, he advanced before her, locked it, and put the key in his pocket. "Now, young lady, I think you must listen to me with your will or without it. I shan't let you go until I have made you hear reason."

Beatrice Grey started. She was indeed in this man's power. If she rang the bell for the servant what good could a young girl of seventeen, neither bright nor quick, do her? If she screamed and made an alarm she might not be heard; the house was detached. There were fields opposite, and the winter afternoon made it unlikely many people would be passing by. The girl folded her arms in despair.

Percy Ashley looked at her triumphantly. This proud, beautiful creature, who did not try to conceal her scorn for him, was now completely in his power. She must listen to him.

"Beatrice!" he began, earnestly, "if you compel me to act like this it is your own fault that I appear harsh. I have made up my mind I will not leave this room except on my own conditions."

No answer. She sat motionless, her violet eyes fixed steadily upon him; no feature of her face varying in the least.

"Shall I tell you what they are?"

No answer. Her silence exasperated him.

"Beatrice!"

"You can tell me what you like, it makes no difference."

"First you sign this contract to appear at the New Theatre when it re-opens, and to continue in my company until next autumn. You can name your own terms; I can pay them."

"If I sign the paper ever so I should not keep its conditions," replied Beatrice, calmly. "I am no lawyer, but I know no promise is binding if extorted by threats."

It was true, and he knew it.

"Shall I tell you the other condition?" he asked, with a bitter smile.

"You can please yourself."

"Beatrice!" standing opposite her and looking at her eagerly, his tone softer and more tender than any he had yet used—"Beatrice, my darling, don't you know what makes me so interested about all you do? Is it possible you don't believe I love you? I know I have not

been what people call good. I daresay people might rake up against me many black things, but if you married me you could do anything with me. You would make me something better than myself. You can't understand how a man like me feels when he really loves; his whole existence is one chaos. I've flirted with lots of girls and not cared one straw really about them. I've run after a pretty face before, but I never felt like now. Beatrice, if you don't listen to me my ruin will lie at your door, and all I do will be your fault, not mine."

He stood looking as though he hung upon her answer. With her eyes bent down so that they should not meet his eager gaze, Beatrice answered:

"I do believe you care for me. Perhaps you love me as much as it is in your power to love, but your love is not worth the name. It is passion, nothing else. Do you think true love could persecute its object as you persecute me? Would a man who loves a woman nobly treat her as you have treated me? a prisoner in my own house, compelled to listen to you whether I will or not? locked in with you for my gaoler? Do you think that is love? Why, if I had liked you before, I should despise you now!"

"But you are not a woman," he retorted, angrily. "You are some beautiful icy statue—some proud, showy queen. You don't care how many hearts that break or how many men go to the dogs for love of you. You don't know anything about love. You are a heartless coquette."

She answered him nothing. These reproaches were easier to bear than his pleadings. Suddenly he looked at his watch.

"Once for all, will you sign that paper?"

"Never! My friend will be home soon," she added, as an afterthought, "and then you will be obliged to release me."

"Why should I be obliged?"

"I should send her for assistance if you refused to unfasten that door."

"Perhaps she wouldn't go. I have a great regard for Mrs. Stone. She's a wise woman. Besides, think of the scandal you would create."

"Scandal or no scandal, I shall do it," said Beatrice, firmly. "Indeed, for your own sake you had better go and not drive me to such a course."

A loud knock had sounded at the door. Beatrice, in her agony of fear, did not hear it; but Percy Ashley did. He knew his last chance was over. It was war to the knife.

"I am going," he said, angrily. "You won't need to arouse the neighbourhood. Never forget, Beatrice, you have driven me to desperation. However it ends it will be your doing."

He sat down beside her and took her hand. She struggled violently to free it, and at the same moment Jane tried the handle of the drawing-room door, and surprised at finding it locked, called out:

"Please open the door, miss. Here's a visitor."

Percy Ashley still held the cold hand of Beatrice.

"Kiss me," he whispered, "and I will open the door."

"I would die first!"

Then, raising her voice, she screamed:

"Jane, open the door—burst it! Quick!"

She struggled violently to free herself from Percy's grasp. In vain. A heavy bang came at the door. In sprang, not awkward and clumsy Jane, but the tall, muscular form of Frank Bertram.

Percy Ashley bent over Beatrice. A minute more, and his lips would have touched hers, when a firm hand grasped him, and he was thrown off the sofa on to his face.

"I shall not soil my hands by punishing you," said his assailant. "Go!" and Frank Bertram was obeyed.

Our hero turned then to look at Beatrice.

"He is gone," he said, gently; "don't be afraid. You have been terribly frightened?"

"Yes," she said, feebly. "How can I ever thank you?"

Then her head fell back on his shoulder. For the second time in her life she lay senseless in his arms.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### TWO SUITORS.

For aught that ever I could read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth.  
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

MR. NEHEMIAH STUBBS had just received two letters. Now this in itself was no startling fact. The preacher received a great many letters from females, devout hearers of the Word. Ragged school societies, widows, the elect of Bethel generally all favoured him with epistles, and all that was remarkable in that portion of the correspondence we are about to inspect, was that both the letters we have referred to related to the same person—Muriel Lestrangle.

The first was from Mrs. Bertram. By the time she wrote it she had been quite drawn over to the lover's cause, and openly told Muriel that if the Stubbs were unkind to her, she would always find a home at the Knoll, consequently the matron wrote in a very condescending strain to the pious Nehemiah, not caring at all whether he were offended or not.

Mrs. Bertram briefly informed Mr. Stubbs that Miss Lestrangle was desirous of returning home the following week, to consult her relations on an important subject. Nehemiah was not above the worldly feeling known as curiosity, and he puzzled a great deal over Mrs. Bertram's vague words.

The other letter was from Muriel; a simple, girlish note saying she should be home on Monday, and she trusted he and her Aunt Martha would be pleased to see her after her long absence. Mr. Stubbs showed both letters solemnly to his wife.

"Has she offended Mrs. Bertram?"

Mrs. Stubbs' woman's instinct was quicker.

"No, no, Nehemiah, can't you see. The child has got a lover, and she's coming home to tell us about him."

"At seventeen! already in the snares of the world! Some gay son of Mammon; but I'll put a stop to it. I have picked Mary once before as a weed from the burning; I will save her a second time."

"But, dear," observed his wife, timidly, "the poor child stands alone in the world, and to get a good, kind husband would be the best thing that could happen to her."

"Silence, woman," commanded her lord and master; "Mary has got one husband already. She can't want two."

"She!—a husband!—Mary? What do you mean?"

"Jeremiah Bigs is ready to marry her as soon as she is old enough. He's a good, honest youth, and his parents are well to do. It's a better chance than Mary could have looked for."

"But Mary may not like Jeremiah."

"Not like him. What's that got to do with it. I mean her to marry him. His parents like the idea; they think Mary may be formed into a dutiful daughter-in-law. Elder Bigs told me himself he'd give another subscription to our Bethel as soon as the young folks were married."

"I didn't think the Bigs' had ever seen Mary?"

"At chapel. And what do you think Jeremiah came here every Lord's Day for? It's my belief that young man has set his whole heart on Mary, and I'm quite sure he'll lead her aright and bring her to our Bethel every Lord's Day that dawns, and children after her."

Mrs. Stubbs sighed. Remember she had not always been Nehemiah's wife. She was not an old woman yet, and she could remember when she and Muriel's mother had been young together, and her girlhood's hero had been very different from the man she married.

"Mary is very young," she said, pityingly,

"and I don't think Jeremiah is the sort of man to please a girl like her."

"She may think herself rarely fortunate to be chosen by such a one," commented the preacher; "a man who has a good home, to take her to, and a mother to teach her housekeeping. The Biggs are a rising family. I should not wonder if Jeremiah kept his chaise before he died."

Muriel arrived. It was a wonderful change from the grandeur of the Knoll to the bare, plain house at Clapham. For nearly six months Muriel had lived in luxury, had been treated in every way as Mrs. Bertram's own child. She came into the narrow passage, dignified by the name of "hall," in her rich winter dress of blue cashmere; her velvet hat and feathers of the same colour; her dainty hands in a sable muff, looking like one born to luxury and refinement.

Mrs. Stubbs came forward to welcome her, a crying baby in her arms, and thought to herself that never had two people seemed less suited to each other than her niece and Jeremiah Biggs.

"Your uncle's out, Mary dear," she said, kindly; "he's taken the elder children to a prayer meeting at Kennington, and the little ones are in bed. If you come straight downstairs, Molly can get you some tea, and I'll be hearing all you've been doing."

The threadbare carpet; the cane-seated chairs; the microscopic fire; the common china on the table; the thick bread and butter and colourless tea. What a change it all was from Mrs. Bertram's careful home.

Mrs. Stubbs had never been unkind to Muriel. Had she not been so crushed and bowed down by her husband's iron will, she would have made the home a happier one for her niece, and the girl knew this, and felt very glad that this first evening she and Aunt Martha were alone.

"Auntie," were almost her first words, "has there been any news of Beatrice?"

"Not any, dearie." (Mrs. Stubbs did not know her elder niece had entered her dwelling, and the preacher himself had heard nothing of Beatrice since Muriel left Clapham.) "I'm beginning to think there never will be."

The tears welled up in Muriel's blue eyes.

"If she were alive she never would have forsaken me like this."

"No," returned Mrs. Stubbs; "I remember well when you were a baby, Beatrice was quite a little mother to you. She chose the wrong way, poor girl, but I can't think as hardly of her as I ought. Before I married and had children of my own, I loved Beatrice dearly. Many and many's the time I've rocked her to sleep in her little cradle. You didn't speak about her to Mrs. Bertram."

"No."

"That was wise, child; it's a sore subject anyway."

"Aunt Martha!" eagerly; "what do you think has become of Beatrice? Do you think I shall ever see her again?"

"I'm afraid not," very slowly. Then more calmly: "You see, dear, Beatrice took her own path, and she thought she'd get on. If she had I don't believe she'd have left you all alone so long. I think she's married—or dead!"

"Married!" ejaculated Muriel, in amazement. "I never thought of that."

"She was pretty."

"She was beautiful enough for a duchess, but if she married ever so, Aunt Martha, why should she desert me?"

The elder woman sighed.

"A wife is ruled by her husband, child. You'll learn that some day. But poor Beatrice may not be married. These two years of struggling may have ruined her health. You don't come of a strong stock."

"I would rather think of her as dead than married," answered Muriel, firmly. "I can't bear to imagine she is well and happy and has forgotten me."

"Yet she is young to die."

"I wish I knew," sighed Muriel. "It's so hard to think she's somewhere fighting her own way; so near me perhaps that I could get to her

in half an hour if I only knew where; she may be quite near me and I not guess it. She might be in awful sorrow and no one tell me. Oh, Aunt Martha, it may seem harsh and cold, but I'd rather think of my darling as safe with our mother in Heaven."

Mrs. Stubbs did not say that being an actress Beatrice was beyond hope of entering Heaven. She was not so severe as her husband.

"There, don't fret," she said, cheerfully; "tell me of yourself. Did you have a pleasant visit?"

"Oh, yes; you can't think how beautiful the Knoll is, Aunt Martha. It's just like fairy land."

Mrs. Stubbs took a glance round her shabby little room and well-worn furniture.

"I am afraid you will feel the change."

"Are you a little glad to see me back, aunt?"

"Yes, but your uncle fears you will be spoiled by all the gaiety you have had."

Muriel got up and went to her aunt's side.

"Aunt Martha, you loved my mother very much, didn't you?"

"Very much."

"Then for her sake help me, Aunt Martha. I haven't come home to stay; someone wants me more than you and uncle do; more than my own mother could do if she were alive. He is coming to see you and uncle to-morrow. Oh, please let it be as he wishes."

Muriel held up her left hand, on which Charles Stuart had placed a ring, a hoop of large pearls; sign and token she was her own no longer. Mrs. Stubbs started.

"What do you mean, Mary? Not engaged, surely?"

"Yes," said Muriel, with a sweet smile; "just that, auntie."

"And who to? Is he a good man, child?"

"He is the best man in the world," replied Muriel, firmly, though quite conscious her standard of excellence and her aunt's differed more than a little; "the kindest and the best. I think I am happier than I have ever been in my whole life before."

"Poor child!"

"No, not poor, anything but that. How can I be poor when he loves me and I am to be his wife?"

"Your uncle will never hear of it."

"He must; he can't be so cruel. You must persuade him, Aunt Martha."

"I should like you to be happy, but we must think of your soul, child. Is this gentleman a Christian?"

"Yes; at least I think so. I am sure he is good; he must be."

"I'm afraid you must give him up. I dare say it sounds hard."

"It does sound very hard, but I don't mean to do it. Charles and I love each other, and until he changes I will never give him up."

"Mary!"

"Would you have given up Uncle Nehemiah if the whole world had wanted you to do? And, oh, Aunt Martha, Mr. Stuart is as much to me; more I think."

The preacher's wife listened to the girl sorrowfully, not a whit offended at her plain speaking, but dreading the disappointment in store for her; that anyone should defy her husband and openly disobey him never entered her imagination. She looked on Muriel's fate as settled; though she might be reluctant, the future would see her the wife of Jeremiah Biggs.

"You are very young," she said, mildly. "Surely you are not in a hurry, Muriel, to be married?"

"If I could see Charles every day," returned Muriel, thoughtfully, "and stay with him as long as ever I liked, I don't think I should ever want to be married at all. I know we shall never have anything to eat, for I never could learn how to keep house. No, if I could always see him I should much rather not be married."

"And he?"

"He wants us to be married at once," gravely.

"I think he really believes if he leaves me here too long someone else will want to marry me."

It's very flattering of him to think so, but I'm sure no one else will."

Mrs. Stubbs thought of Jeremiah and sighed.

(To be Continued.)

## TOO DRESSY BY HALF.

TO THE uninitiated, the examination of the fashion plates of a ladies' book of fashions is a bewildering study. Most of the dresses convey the impression that the designer knows nothing of the harmonies of dress. The costumes are heterogeneous, and wanting in graceful effect. Oh for the neat and becoming attire of yore, when puffs, paniers, and bouffants were unknown, and buttons were made for use rather than ornament!

With the introduction of sewing machines we were in hopes that dressmaking could be done so expeditiously that women would not only find more time for intellectual and social culture, but could also be dressed more economically; but they tell us that the stitches are so multiplied on their dresses, and there are so many skirts, plaits, tucks, and furbelows of one sort or another, that it requires more cloth and more time to make a dress than ever, the expense of making often exceeding the cost of cloth. This state of things would be more tolerable if there were any grace or beauty in all these furbelows. Perhaps "dressy" young ladies do not know that matrimony becomes unfashionable to the same degree that stylish dresses and stylish living grow in favour. In a single city it was computed a few years since that there were twenty thousand women of marriageable age who were husbandless, "homeless and aimless."

Young men certainly cannot afford in these times to take partners that are of the fashionable, butterfly kind. The bills of the milliner and dressmaker make large drafts on the income of men long established in business and having some accumulated capital, and one just starting in life will very likely be swamped if he loads himself down with such an expensive luxury as a dressy wife. Most girls are proud of dress, and it is natural that they should be so. They love to make themselves attractive, and this is all right if the love is accompanied by good taste and directed by good judgment. The trouble is that they are inclined to be dressy—or rather too ostentatious in their attire. This love of display is not confined to the rich and fashionable, as is too commonly supposed. It shows itself in all the layers of society.

And this is where the trouble lies. The girl who has little money at her disposal desires to dress as well as the rich man's daughter. Not being able to afford the "real thing," she contents herself with a shabby imitation, and follows the fashions at a distance, to her own injury and sensible people's disgust.—Ed.]

## A STRATAGEM.

A PARTY of travellers were on their way to town in an old-fashioned stage-coach. As highway robberies were at that time of frequent occurrence, the passengers began to talk of robbers. One gentleman expressing much anxiety lest he should lose ten guineas, was advised by a lady who sat next to him, to take it from his pocket and slip it into his boot, which he did immediately. It was not long before the coach was stopped by a highwayman, who, riding up to the window on the lady's side, demanded her money; she declared she had none, but if he would examine the gentleman's boot, he would there find ten guineas.

The gentleman submitted patiently, but when the robber departed he loaded his female travelling companion with abuse, declaring her to be in confederacy with the highwayman. She said little in her own defence, but said that if the company in the stage would sup with her the



following evening in town she would explain a conduct which appeared so mysterious. After some debate they all accepted her invitation; and the next evening, in calling on her, were ushered into a magnificent room, where a very elegant supper was prepared. When this was over she produced a pocket-book, and addressing the gentleman who had been robbed, said:

"In this book, sir, are banknotes to the amount of a thousand pounds. I thought it better for you to lose ten guineas than me this valuable property, which I had with me last night. As you have been the means of saving it I entreat the acceptance of this banknote of one hundred pounds."

#### REGARD FOR OTHER PEOPLE.

No one has a right to wilfully disregard the feelings of other people; and the man who presents a slovenly appearance in public neglects his duty to his neighbour. I fully sympathise with society in its propensity to snub those who appear in public inappropriately dressed. I think the farmer who persists, in spite of the earnest persuasions of his wiser wife and daughters, to come to town in the same rusty garments he wears around the barn and stable, makes a great mistake, and betrays a lack of real kindness of feeling. At any rate, if he only could know it, and see it, he is not treated with as much respect as he otherwise would be.

We know an old farmer who is very wealthy. His wife and grown-up sons and daughters are highly educated, refined and cultivated, while they are very fastidious, almost to "old-maidism." They have a good deal of aristocratic company. The dinner is spread in elegance, the damask and silver and glass glisten. The daughters are well dressed, the sons are tidied up for the meal, everything betokens good breeding, when just as the whole company is seated, in comes the farmer from the barn or stable, his white shirt protruding from both elbows, and his whole appearance unkempt and untidy.

You can imagine the feelings of his cultivated family. They are mortified, but they are not wise, for this peculiar behaviour in a well-to-do farmer, whose only failing is this one feature, this eccentricity, passes for genius, while the guests enjoy his comical conversational powers and grotesque appearance quite as much as the precise conventional behaviour of the other members of the family. The man does wrong, however. He has no right to wound the sensibilities of his wife and children.—Ed.]

#### A NARROW GROOVE.

Men and women of small minds delight in petty gossip and personalities. They discuss the dress and habits of neighbours and acquaintances; a bit of scandal is a great event, a new garment of a neighbour more than a famine or a treaty afar off, a wedding or a funeral, more than a declaration of peace or war. Particularly is this the case in the country. The city is too great and absorbing for small scandals except of the most eminent men. People come into contact for a few moments at a time, and only for special business, so that there is no room for the petty scandals of smaller communities, and there is less of hatred and enmity. But in the country, small feuds and jealousies flourish.

In remote farming districts, where the minister is paid sixty or seventy pounds a year, and is of course a poor stick, the doctor and the lawyer live in the nearest village, the school teachers are the farmers' daughters, and there is no variety of occupation, mere lack of intellectual stimulus drives the community into personal criticisms to supply the craving. A new bonnet for the minister's wife is an event of importance; the misdemeanours of his children

are public scandals; families quarrel with a bitterness unknown in cities except in the lowest tenement houses, and with a deeper and more lasting hostility than even there. Even tolerably intelligent people will quarrel bitterly over the most trifling matters, and cherish old family feuds from generation to generation.

In a larger community, where there are more varied interests, and more extended matters to occupy the minds of the people, such a squabble could not exist. The small horizon, the few excitements, and the limited means of amusement in such communities, make even a quarrel a godsend.

## FRINGED WITH FIRE.

By the Author of "Bound to the Trawl," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

### CHAPTER XX.

"THEN YOU WILL MARRY THE GIRL?"

That proud heart had been given to one  
Who sought it not to win.  
And now she only strove to hide  
The burning shame within.

LONDON.

MEANWHILE matters were not going on comfortably at Wardour Hall. The dinner party had been pronounced a success, but I am afraid there was very little real enjoyment in it except for those of the guests who cared only for an elaborate meal.

Cyril Champneys, it is true, managed to improve the occasion by paying marked attention to Mary Landsdale, greatly to the annoyance of his hostess, but as he contrived to include Judith Henen in the conversation, even Mrs. Wardour could not object when he suggested that the two girls should throw some light covering over their heads and stroll out with him into the gardens, that looked so lovely in the bright moonlight.

"I am afraid you will take cold," was all that the mistress of the house could say against it, but the girls laughed, assuring her there was not the least danger, and as their example was soon followed by the majority of the remaining guests, even Mrs. Wardour herself accompanied by Squire Landsdale, stepped out on to the lawn.

"I hope you will take care of Mary. I should be very much grieved to think she had become the prey of a fortune-hunter," the old lady was saying, "and I have not yet given up all hope that our wishes with regard to our children may be accomplished some day."

"I don't know," was the reply; "women are 'kittle cattle,' and Mary has of late shown that she has a will of her own such as she never gave any indication of before. I am afraid disobedience is infectious with young people; it was not so in our days."

"No," with a sigh.

Then they walked on in silence for a time. Cyril Champneys with the two girls by his side, but at a very safe and discreet distance from his aunt, was likewise pushing his own schemes and plans to what he hoped would one day be a successful issue. The light jesting and badinage they had indulged in when they first left the drawing-room had ceased.

Judith was thinking dreamily and tenderly of Lord Rookford, while a sense of pain now and again came across her as she felt the conviction that his heart was filled with the image of another, and that he did not love her.

Mary Landsdale had forgotten for the moment who was by her side, and remembered only how, as boy and girl and man and woman she and Arthur Wardour had wandered about this place, as brother and sister, it is true, but with a half consciousness in her heart, and she had believed in his, that the relationship was one day to be of a closer and more tender nature. Now, all this was past and gone, and only the sharp, writhing pain of bitter humiliation remained behind. She was aroused by Cyril Champneys'

voice quoting Shelley, as though the poet had but expressed his own feelings.

How beautiful this night! The balmy sigh  
Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear  
Were discord to the speaking quietude  
That wraps this moveless scene.

"Yes," said Mary, with something like a sigh; "it is a beautiful night, and this is a beautiful place."

"Moonlight and love always seems to my mind to go together," the young man went on.

"Moonlight and hate are much more appropriate companions, I think," Judith observed. "Don't you agree with me, Mr. Wardour?" seeing that gentleman a few steps in advance and alone.

"What? What did you say, missy?"

The remark was repeated, the squire replied, but the two others strolled on; it was an opportunity that Champneys had been hoping for, one that might never occur again, and that he could not allow to escape him. Not that he would dare to propose to-night, his object in doing so would be too apparent, but he could make the girl believe that he loved her; fill her mind with this idea; lead her to look forward to meeting him again, and then ask to be allowed to come over and study some portions of the Manor House, the architecture of which interested him.

And he succeeded. Mary Landsdale's heart was "swept and garnished" ready for an occupant, and Cyril Champneys easily took possession of the stronghold that had once been Arthur Wardour's.

"Papa, Mr. Champneys wants to look over our house, and I have invited him to lunch with us on Monday next. You will be at home on that day, won't you?" asked Mary, when they encountered her father half an hour later.

"Yes; glad to see you, sir, glad to see you. Can't think what folks find in my house to make such a fuss about, I'm sure; it's become a perfect show place. Luncheon at one, sir; always punctual in my house—always punctual."

"Thank you; I am never behind time," with a smile. Soon after this the party broke up.

"And what about Mrs. Henen and the Crays-forths?" you may ask.

They were here, to all outward appearances, the very best of friends, but Mrs. Henen had not only shown her talons, but had dug them deep into the flesh of her victims. She had shown some of her power, and had named the price for her silence, but even she did not know the whole secret which these two victims to their own greed and ambition carried about with them, poisoning the springs of life and turning its sweetest joys to briny bitterness. In revealing the existence of her power over them and her intention of using it, Mrs. Henen had been very different in her treatment of her two victims.

To Lady Craysforth she stated the facts in all their brutal nakedness, saying distinctly what she could and would do, unless her demands were complied with. But to the earl she was honey and sugar, even though there might be a dash of acidity with it, and she hinted at rather than spoke openly of certain circumstances which had come to her knowledge, and then she began to talk about blighted hearts and woman's love, and of the affection which she declared she believed to have sprung up between her daughter and Lord Craysforth's son, finishing up with the still more startling assertion that she was herself so fond of the earl and of his wife that she would like to feel she was one of their family and could come and stay with them or go away whenever she chose.

Indeed this was one of the most objectionable features of her exactions, and just as it is so much more comfortable to fix our burdens upon other people's shoulders, than it is to carry them ourselves, so the earl and countess would readily enough have consented to their son marrying Judith, if by so doing the mother's silence could be ensured, but, the lady in particular, positively refused to have "that woman" forcing her companionship upon her.

So matters stood, a kind of armed truce

having been proclaimed; the conditions had neither been accepted nor refused, and Mrs. Henen was quite conscious of the fact that nothing could be gained by impatience, and that undue pressure would be a mistake. It was on the very Monday succeeding the dinner party; the day on which Cyril Champneys was to lunch at the Manor House, that Lord Rookford again made his appearance at Wardour Hall.

Judith Henen's face lighted up with a bright, glad smile when she met him, for this sudden meeting had thrown her off her guard, and her eyes, I am afraid, told a story which her lips would have been slow to confess.

Lord Craysforth was surprised; so indeed was Mrs. Wardour, and everybody felt that he had more than ordinary motives for coming back so soon. They were right. He had, in point of fact the reason of his presence here was, first of all, to ask his father's consent to his marriage with Rosalind, and, afterwards, whatever the result might be, to make some inquiries in the neighbourhood of Worcester relative to the story which he had heard from Mr. Vere.

That unprincipled old man had told Rookford a great deal which he had found it difficult to believe, but the man had produced certain proofs in confirmation of what he had said, and had eventually left the young man's presence richer than when he entered it by a hundred pounds, and the promise that if his information were of any permanent value to the persons it concerned he should receive a further and more ample reward by-and-by.

Thus matters stood when Rookford returned to the Hall, and he had scarcely been back an hour when he said to his father:

"Can I speak a few words to you in private, sir?"

"Certainly," was the reply, with a smile on the face that had become so grave of late; "shall we take a turn in the park, or would you prefer coming into my room?"

"We will go out in the park; it is cool under the trees, and we shall be freer there than in the house."

Then father and son walked away towards the deer park, so like, and yet so unlike each other; walked away together, but never to come back again on the same affectionate footing as when they left the house.

"Well, what is it?"

It was the earl who asked the question. He was hoping that his son's sudden return was in some way connected with Judith Henen, and that the young man would comply with Mrs. Henen's demand without ever knowing it had been made, and that he would live and die in ignorance of the dark secret which hung like a black pall over his house.

"I can never tell him what it is—never," the earl had often said; and now he jumped at the hope that the necessity for telling him would never arise.

"I am in love with a girl; I want to marry her, and I want your consent to my doing so," blurted out the young man.

"Stated with biblical plainness," said the earl, while an expression of relief came over his worn face; "but she is a nice girl; she will make you a good wife, I have no doubt, and though I might have wished you to marry into a noble family, still you are old enough to judge for yourself, and my consent after all is but a matter of form; but I am pleased you have asked it, and it is yours."

And he held out his hand to his son. The other took the proffered hand doubtfully, as he said:

"Thank you, father; but do you quite understand? You speak as though you knew Rosalind well."

"Rosalind!" repeated his father, a white shade overspreading his face. "Judith, you mean. It is Judith Henen you want to marry, is it not?"

"Oh, no," impatiently. How could you suppose such a thing? It is Rosalind Vere, the actress!"

"Rosalind Vere!" repeated the earl, beginning to feel faint and giddy; passing his hand over

his face and lifting his hat from his head to allow the breeze to fan it. "No, I don't know her," he went on, in almost a dazed manner; "but it cannot be; you must marry Judith Henen; I have promised it!"

"But, father!" burst out the young man, angrily.

"Wait a minute; don't talk; take me to a seat—your arm."

And the half fainting man was caught by his son and supported a few steps to where a tree that had been recently felled lay prostrate. Upon this the earl sat down, but his son was alarmed at the ghastly pallor of his face, and said he would run to the house and get some water or brandy.

"No, no, don't leave me. I shall be better soon," the elder man gasped—"better soon," he repeated, wearily, pressing his hand upon his heart and looking worn and aged, so much so that his son was becoming seriously alarmed.

But the father would not be left alone. He was getting better, and he had soon sufficiently recovered himself to say:

"We will continue our conversation; it is above all things important you should marry Judith Henen, and I have had every reason to believe you yourself wished it."

"I don't know how you should have reason to believe anything of the kind, father. I have loved Rosalind for nearly a year. I have not breathed a word of love to any other woman during that time, and though Miss Henen is a very nice little girl, I know nothing about her, and I have only treated her with friendly politeness."

"But don't you think she would make you a very good wife, Jack?"

"I am sure she will never have the chance of trying," somewhat doggedly. "If I ever marry I shall marry Rosalind; on that point let there be no doubt or question between us, father."

Again the earl's face paled, but he conquered his emotion, and said, with evident pain and reluctance, while his eyes persistently evaded those of his son:

"Jack, there is a secret; a— a criminal secret concerning us; our family I mean, which Mrs. Henen is aware of, and I have promised that you shall marry her daughter as the price of her silence!"

"And does the daughter know of this precious bargain?" with a bitter sneer.

"No; we hoped neither of you would know or ever hear of it, and that the marriage would come about naturally; and it must be, Jack—it must be. If you refuse we shall all be ruined and disgraced, I, your mother and yourself—all of us. If I could bear it alone I would, but I cannot—I cannot. The sins of the fathers come heavily upon the children, and mine will crush you!"

"But surely, father, you cannot have been capable of any crime that could really put you into this woman's power. Why not stand up proudly and proclaim the truth?"

The truth! He looked very little like a man ready to stand up and brave the world. He, with his frame bowed down and his face buried in his hands, a picture of abject misery, despair and guilt.

Lord Rookford looked at his father, and his proud heart sank within him. Was this the parent of whom he had been so proud? This the noble gentleman who—so unlike many men of rank—seemed to have no vices and but few follies? This creature so bent and broken, a self-confessed criminal?

"Father!"

The voice was harsh and stern that uttered the word, though the speaker had no intention that it should be so.

"Rouse yourself," he went on; "it is useless shrinking and cowering before a difficulty. If a wrong has been done to anyone, undo it; make restitution; meet the danger or disgrace if it must be met, but do not pay hush money in any form, or try to cover up an ulcer that requires to be cut away to save both body and soul. Rouse yourself, father, and tell me what hold it is that this woman has gained over you."

"Will you help me?" asked the earl, eagerly.

"If I can, most certainly I will," said the young man.

"Then you will marry this girl?"

"No, I will not. If a wrong has been committed I will help you to redress it if it is in my power, but I do not believe in committing one crime to cover another; it is but piling up the iniquity. Tell me the whole facts of the case, father; let me judge for myself what can be done to save us."

But the earl shook his head impatiently, rose to his feet, and said, in a tone that was fretful and petulant, though there was a ring of displeasure in it:

"I don't want to be preached to, Rookford. Whatever I have done in the past, and that rises up against me in the present, was at your mother's instigation, and for your good." Then, after a pause, he looked up suddenly and asked again:

"You won't marry the girl?"

"No, I will not," firmly. "I shall marry no woman but Rosalind."

"Then you will never marry her with my consent," with a sudden burst of anger.

The young man made no reply, for a great gulf seemed to have opened between his father and himself, while he vainly racked his brain in trying to imagine what crime his parents could have been guilty of.

Thus the two men, so closely related but now so wide apart, walked back to the house in silence, for the breach which had sprung up between them that day could never be healed.

An hour later Rookford had again left Wardour Hall, though this time his destination was no farther than Worcester, where he put up at an hotel. His object in coming here was to hunt up something about Rosalind's parentage; but he felt so sick at heart and crushed in spirit by his father's confession that for the time he was incapable of thinking of anything else.

"I have heard there is a skeleton in every man's closet," he muttered, bitterly, "and I have declared it to be untrue because I had not one, but I have skeletons enough now, in all conscience."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE CRAYSFORTHS SEE ROSALIND.

By a divine instinct, men's minds mistrust  
Ensuing danger.

SEVERAL weeks have passed since that conversation took place in Wardour Park between Lord Rookford and his father. Since that time the earl and his son have not met, nor have they written to each other.

Mrs. Wardour has indeed greatly changed during this time. Her once stately form has become bowed and infirm, and there are deep lines of suffering upon her proud face, while her silvery hair has lost its gloss and shimmer, and she looks positively an old woman, as though years instead of weeks had passed over her head.

Successful all her life up to this point, she now meets with nothing but defeat and failure. Her son, in whom all her hopes had once been centred, is still away from home, studying and working for independence, though there will be wealth enough for him when his parents are dead.

She has plotted and planned—she has even descended to falsehood and treachery—to divide him from the woman he loves, but, though she has succeeded in making him very unhappy at the thought that Florence had once loved another as well, perhaps better, than she now loved him, and has not told him about it, still, this has made no difference in his present relationship with her. He is as far away from his mother as ever, while she has forfeited her own self-respect in vain.

As misfortunes never come singly, Mrs. Wardour having lost her son, now felt she was about to lose the girl whom she had looked upon as her possible daughter, for Mary Landsdale had accepted Cyril Champneys' assiduous devotion and had promised to become his wife.



It had been in vain that Mrs. Wardour had expostulated and entreated. The girl was firm and determined even to obstinacy. Mr. Landsdale's influence was also exerted against the new lover in vain—though personally he had no great objection to him, but Mary was not to be moved.

She urged—truly enough—that she had been held up as an object of pity, a girl to be pointed at as the one Arthur Wardour had refused to marry, and all because her father and his mother had, while they were children, made up the match.

Not that she blamed Arthur, she went on. She thought he was quite right in choosing a wife for himself; she had determined to follow his example and choose a husband for herself. Then they could all be friends. But friends or enemies she was going to do as she liked. That was her resolve, and her father yielded to it as she knew from the first he would do.

So Cyril Champneys was triumphant, the prize of a rich wife was promised him, and though Lady Craysforth assumed to be frightfully jealous and declared that she hated the sight of him, and Mrs. Wardour very plainly intimated that his presence was no longer welcome at the Hall, he took it all with smiling amiability. "He may laugh who wins," was his mental comment, and not a ruffle of ill temper or annoyance appeared upon his darkly handsome face.

More than that, his work, for the time at least, was accomplished here; his presence was required in London; so he went on a visit to the Manor House for a few days, which he spent in intoxicating Mary with her strange and new-born happiness, in winning the goodwill and friendship of her father, and in being formally introduced to her relatives and friends in the county as her future husband.

All of which was gall and wormwood to Mrs. Wardour, though the squire himself was rather pleased than otherwise at his nephew's success.

After this, the Craysfords left the Hall, and Mrs. Henen went with them. There had been many discussions concerning their destination, for Rookford Towers was not yet ready for occupation—or the countess declared it was not—and her ladyship likewise insisted that her health required a visit to the sea-side.

"Then where shall we go, dear?" asked Mrs. Henen, finding that despite all her efforts to visit the Towers as a guest, she must still defer that pleasure.

"We," repeated her ladyship.

"Yes, certainly I shall go with you," was the calm reply, while the keen black eyes fixed themselves on the shrinking grey ones, which of late had been, by no means as resolute in expression as had been their wont.

"But," impatiently, "I don't quite know where we are going; when we are settled either at Rookford or Craysforth, we shall be pleased to see you, but now I can't ask you to join us."

"You can please yourself, Lady Craysforth, whether you ask me to join you or not, but you quite realise the consequences, I hope, if you do not. The matter between your son and Judith I am content to allow to rest for awhile; no doubt your influence and his father's will bring him to his senses and convince him that his own welfare depends upon his obedience; but with regard to our second condition I will have no evasion: I am to be a welcome member of your family whenever I choose to claim the privilege, or I shall take my own course, and you will find it will be an energetic one. I know I am putting myself in danger by allowing such a crime as murder!"

"It is false!" interrupted the countess, springing to her feet, "utterly false. But take care, use no more of your threats, for I will not bear it. Come where you like, go where you like, but never speak to me again like this, or I will dare all and do even more than you threaten to do for us."

Then the excited woman rushed out of the room.

"False!" repeated Mrs. Henen, while her dark eyes gleamed with triumph—"false. Then if that be so, he is not dead, and if living, he is

a far more powerful instrument for bringing them low than even positive proof of his murder would have been; and I thought I had got that proof. But people in a passion often speak the truth, and I believe she has just let out more of it than she intended. Let me see."

And she sat down to meditate. Soon the door opened, and her daughter walked into the room.

"I was looking for you, mamma," she said, languidly.

"What do you want?" with some irritation.

"I want to know what we are going to do? Mrs. Wardour is evidently tired of us; she almost said as much just now, and we are not so poor as to be obliged to eat out our welcome in this manner. I am sure I wish we had never come here; we have lost the season in London, and all for what? And now if we go back to town, there won't be a soul there. And I am tired and weary of everything."

"So I should think from your tone and manner," severely; "but you will remember, please, that if we had been in town we couldn't have let our house for the season as we have done, and that we should have spent a good deal of money that we now have in hand. You ask where we are going; where would you like to go?"

"I am sure I don't know. I don't seem to care very much about anything or any place."

"Well, the Craysfords are going to the sea-side, and we are going with them."

"The Craysfords!" in surprise. "I didn't know they were so fond of us."

"We are going with them," ignoring the last remark.

"Shall we meet Lord Rookford?" with a flushed face and trembling voice, both of which her mother noticed, though she made no comment about them.

"I don't know; the young man wants to form a low connection, and his father wishes him to marry you," was the reply; "but there is but one way in which it can end."

"And what is that?" asked Judith.

"By your one day, becoming Countess of Craysforth."

"Whether Lord Rookford likes to marry me or no—" a trifle bitterly.

"He must like; he will find his only salvation in liking, or at any rate, obeying," returned the old woman, almost savagely.

"What is this secret, mother—you might as well tell me? If it is very dreadful, one would scarcely care to marry into a family over which such a danger hangs."

"Tell you!" with a scornful laugh; "no, I don't give away my power. But you talk of not caring to marry into the family; you are not going to disobey me, I suppose?"

"Have I given any sign of it?" with assumed indignation.

"No," slowly; "but leave me, I want to think."

Judith obeyed, but she was sad and heart-sick. She had missed Lord Rookford greatly, and, after a fashion of her own, she loved him, but she was wretched and miserable at the thought of having been the cause of dissension between him and his father, and she firmly determined that unless he wanted to marry her for herself alone, she would never be his wife.

"And if he loves another girl and she is in any way worthy of him I'll help him to marry her if I can," she determined. "I never could understand the mean, pitiful jealousy that would make a woman ruin the happiness of a man she loved, because though he may have a very great regard for her, he prefers another woman for his wife. If a man had not deceived me and pretended to love me, I would help him and be happy because he was. But if he had once seemed to love me and then had left me for another—ah well! I am afraid I should be nearly as vindictive as my mother is."

From which it may be gathered that it was a fortunate thing for Lord Rookford that he had never transgressed the boundary line of friendship or made love to Judith Henen. The next morning the girl heard that they were to go to

Scotland, where the earl had a fishing box and some shooting, and where his yacht the "Fairy" could take them for a cruise among the islands.

Judith was delighted; she had thought of suggesting that she should stay behind at Jasmine Cottage, to keep Florence company, but a visit to Scotland was too great a temptation for her cousinly regard to withstand, and she at once gave up her half-formed notion of remaining in Worcester.

"I wish I was going with you," said the squire, regretfully, when the plans were discussed over the breakfast table.

"Why not come?" exclaimed the earl, eagerly. "There will be plenty of room for you and Alicia, and we should be delighted to have your company."

Mr. Wardour looked at his wife. It was quite evident that he would like to accept the invitation.

"Go by all means," she said, calmly; "you will enjoy it. I should like you to go."

"But you will go also?" he asked.

"No; I don't care to travel, I prefer staying at home. Don't think of me; I can look after everything in your absence."

"But you will be so lonely," he argued, not quite liking to take her at her word.

"I am never lonely," she replied, briefly, "and I don't see so much of you at any time as to make me feel your absence keenly. So you will decide to go. I wish you to do so."

The earl and countess were both eager in their invitation. Perhaps they felt that Mrs. Henen's presence would not be so great a blight upon them if Mr. Wardour were of the party, and thus it was that the squire, after a good deal of persuasion, agreed to go.

"You are sure you don't mind being left behind and without me, my dear?" he asked, as they were about to start.

"I prefer it," was the cold reply.

The answer chilled him, and he was silent for some time after they had left the avenue of stately elms.

Oh! could either of them have looked into the future and have seen what it held in store for them, surely they would not have parted like this.

The proud, cold woman went back to her solitary hearth to nurse her grief for her son, her grief for the failure of her own plans and schemes, alone. And her husband, younger in years, still younger in constitution and temperament, soon threw off the depression that was upon him, and, before they reached London, where they were to stay for a few days prior to going northward, he was so bright and cheerful as to be the life and soul of the whole party.

"So glad we came to London first," said the squire, as they alighted from the train. "I want to see my boy Arthur, you know. Perhaps he'd like to go with us, and I must see that actress I've read so much about; Rosalind Vere."

"Rosalind!" Where had the earl heard that name? He wondered silently; then it suddenly flashed back upon him, and he replied, though in a strained tone:

"Yes; is she still acting?"

"I suppose so; unless the theatre is closed."

"No; it won't close for some days," here interrupted Judith Henen, "and I should so much like to see her again. May I go with you?"

"By all means, missy. Of course you shall come, and we'll go and see the waxworks too if you like?"

"No, thank you; I have a lively horror of Madame Tussaud's; but I do want to see Rosalind Vere. I read in a newspaper the other day that she was something more than a danseuse, and was going in for the legitimate drama. She has a very good voice too they say."

"I suppose there isn't much difference among those people; they're all of one class," drawled the countess, as though she were speaking of some inferior order of animals.

But the remark stung Judith, for she partly guessed that it was because of this very girl that Lord Rookford's heart had been proof against herself, and she answered, quickly:

"The difference between them is as great as between a schoolmistress and a countess; for



## [MRS. HENEN'S INTENTIONS.]

my own part I admire a woman who has risen from the ranks; she must have something good or great in her; for that reason I know I should like this Rosalind Vere if I ever met her."

"What a very energetic young woman Miss Henen is," remarked her ladyship, some time later to her husband. "I never quite know whether I like her very much or detest her."

"You like her better than the mother?" asked the earl.

"The mother! She is simply atrocious! I only hope I shall not in some exasperating moment be tempted to kill her."

"Marion! Are you mad?"

"No, my dear; if I had been mad I should certainly have done it; and it would have been found out, which might have been awkward."

"It would. Pray don't give way to such tempers."

The countess laughed harshly; then announced her intention of going to the theatre to see Rosalind Vere perform in a drama which had been specially adapted for her.

"Don't. I beg you not to go," urged the earl; but his wife was obstinate, even when he gave her his reason for wishing her not to visit the theatre where the woman acted whom his son wanted to marry. She derided his objection as a whim, and sent off a servant without delay to engage a box.

"You must get two or three stall tickets as well, for I hate to be crowded," remarked her ladyship; and she was also careful to order a couple of bouquets, one for Judith and one for herself.

I am afraid that half of Lady Craysforth's motive in going to the theatre was a desire to inflict pain upon others, and particularly, if possible, to provoke Mrs. Henen. True, she and her husband, to a certain extent, were in that woman's power, but, while seeming to yield to it, she found it still possible to inflict little pricks and stabs upon her oppressor, and let the little dark creature do what she would, she often found the countess more than a match for her.

Another thing her ladyship did was always to select Judith as her companion when they were all together, and what she had said to her husband was really true. She never quite knew whether she loved or hated the girl.

They are going to the theatre, however. The seats have been taken, and the party set off, all of them except the earl and Mrs. Henen, in high spirits. He dreads that he may meet his son; she feels a presentiment of coming evil, but from what quarter the blow will be struck she cannot tell.

"Judith and I will go in the box. There are three stalls engaged, and you can come and visit us," said the countess to her companions, as she, followed by the girl, walked into the private box.

True, the view from the stalls was the best, but Mrs. Henen felt herself slighted, and was inclined to be silent and sulky in consequence. It was not until the second act that Rosalind made her appearance as a gipsy girl. She was supposed to have been stolen from her home and parents in her childhood, and was now brought by the tribe to her father's house to dance before him and his assembled guests.

There was nothing novel in the drama. It was the actress who gave to her part such a charm of wild, deep pathos that the entire audience listened and watched in rapt enjoyment.

She had not much to say, but her acting was perfect because so simple and so natural, and when she danced Judith Henen felt her heart throb with admiration, almost with love, for this beautiful, graceful creature, and impulsively she threw her own bouquet at Rosalind's feet.

Easily, as though it were part of the performance, the actress picked up the flowers, smiled her thanks, and carried them through the scene as though they only had been wanting to complete her part; but, as the girl smiled upon her, Judith involuntarily said:

"Yes, she is the very image of Clara Cousins."

A man from an opposite box, but hidden by the curtain, saw Judith's action, recognised her face, and almost blessed her for her frankly shown appreciation; but he was much more surprised later on to see his mother take a gold bracelet from her arm, tie it with her lace handkerchief to her bouquet, and when the applause was at its highest throw it as an offering on the stage.

Lord Rookford was surprised, as well he might be; also he wondered where his father was, for it was quite evident he was not in the box with the countess and Judith. But he had not long to wait for an answer to his mental question, for anxious eyes are directed to the stalls, and he sees with alarmed surprise his uncle and Mrs. Henen and a man who has fainted. Instinctively he feels that it is his father, and he hurries from his box and hastens to his aid.

Then they get the unconscious man out into the cool passage and put ice to his forehead and neck and force water down his throat, hold salts to his nose, and gradually he gasps and moves and begins to revive.

But as soon as he opens his eyes he looks round fearfully, and says, as though uttering his thoughts aloud:

"It is one of them, or it is she come back from the grave to confront me."

"Father," said the young man, shaking him somewhat roughly, for he feared he might say something compromising, "father, don't you know where you are? Do you feel better? Shall I order the carriage? Are you well enough to stand?"

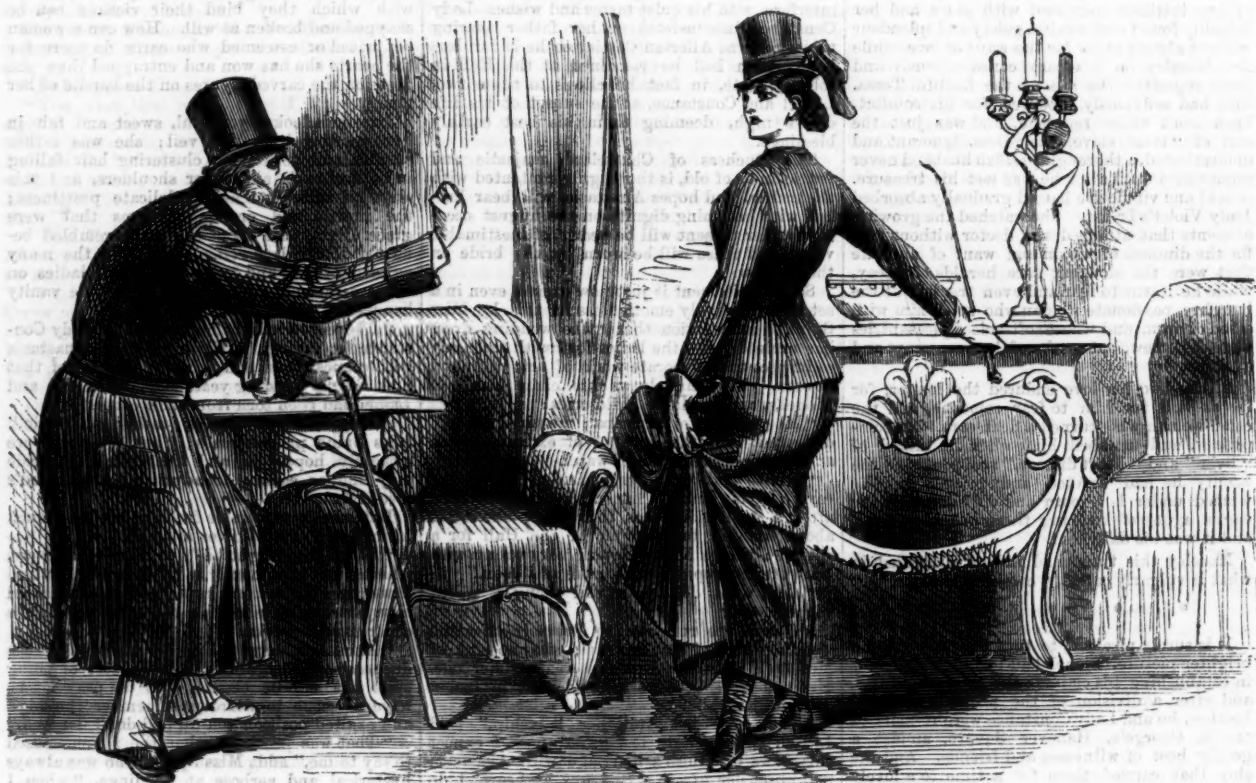
"Rookford!" said the earl, for the first time recognising his son! "You here? Where am I?"

"In a theatre. The heat has been too much for you. Uncle, will you look after my mother? Now, lean on my arm, father."

And so saying the young man led him away to his carriage.

(To be Continued.)





[CONJUGAL BLISS.]

## LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS.

## CHAPTER XL.

## AFTER LONG YEARS.

All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,  
But breathless as we grow when feeling most,  
And silent as we stand in thoughts too deep.

The evil instincts implanted in the natures of such women as Lady Violet Harrington have "grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength," till they rise in quick and sure revolt, and submerge them in those deeper waves of guilt, of which coquetry represents but the surface.

The news of her elopement with Dr. Moseley fell like a thunderbolt on the earl; it was so sudden, it seemed impossible to be realised. This belle dame sans merci had not paused in her heartless career to remember the woes of the forsaken, and Tessa, still wailing piteously as she awoke from sleep and returned to the world once more, called down anything but blessings on the head of the syren who had caused her destruction.

But Tessa was quite sure Lady Violet would live to repent her flight, and the only drain of consolation she could extract from the bitter cup she had to swallow was the thought of her subsequent remorse and suffering.

Tessa believed a time must come when Ebenezer would find his love turning to hatred, and then Lady Violet would shrink from his anger and reproaches as she had done.

The poor creature returned home sick at heart; such confusion reigned in her small brain, she could hardly give orders to the servants or compose her mind. She could not write sentimental verses like her husband, but pain that was far beyond his comprehension or appreciation held her captive and dazed her

senses as she passed from room to room, knowing her husband would never more return.

She understood that Lady Violet was a heartless coquette, who had ensnared this man more for an amusement than for love, whereas she was ready to die for him, and spite of his cruelty and neglect, still clung to his memory with the strong fanaticism of the ignorant.

Jennings, the dwarf, who had made several vain attempts to escape from the asylum, and had in consequence on each occasion nearly paid the forfeit with his life, already breathed freer since Dr. Moseley's non-appearance. Several of the keepers were standing about in groups discussing the affair when Tessa returned. Various "ugly" cases might now be brought to the light of day, and they were all anxious to gain information of the truant.

Tessa, carrying the baby carefully under the heavy shawl, went straight to the library, where she found the dwarf studying Darwin, with a cup of strong coffee by his side. He had already begun to think of freedom now as a certainty.

"What news, dear madame, of our friend, Dr. Moseley?" he asked, his heart palpitating.

"Die worst news. Dey 'ave eloped!" answered Tessa, growing more resigned to the situation since the worst was known, and all hope had to be abandoned.

Jennings did not ask, "Dov'è la donna," he only sighed, reflecting women were more or less the inevitable pitfalls that led to the ruin of the other sex.

He remembered the wiles of that bright-eyed widow who had been the cause of his making Dr. Moseley's acquaintance in the first instance, and was silent.

"I wish I was dead," said Tessa, throwing herself back in an arm-chair, "before evare I learnt all this misery."

"May I ask the name of—the lady?" said Jennings, fearful after all the affair might be a hoax, and his enemy return and sentence him to be half drowned in the tank in the yard as a relief to the brain.

"Here name; it choke me to say; she is

English, of course—Lady Violet Harrington."

The dwarf started from his chair.

"Sister to the poor young lady who was kept hours in the padded room, and then thrown into the dark cell?"

Tessa nodded her head.

"I 'ope she live to repent her wickedness. Were dere not plenty of other men to take without stealing a married one?"

"Love is blind," said Jennings, thinking of the widow.

"Then when she open here eyes, I 'ope she see 'atred written in his," said Tessa, severely, rising to ring the bell.

And then, after ordering some refreshment, she passed on to the nursery to comfort herself by looking at her children. Tessa's wish regarding Lady Violet's fate was not quite unfulfilled in the future; years which are the sure and only test of love did not bring her ladyship happiness.

Some months after the divorce she became Dr. Moseley's wife, but there came a time when a world-weary woman, with a still glowing beauty, but a dead and withered heart, found that certain retribution overtakes the wicked, and that there is never any prospect of lasting contentment with one who has no high sense of duty or of honour.

The selfishness and unscrupulousness which had ever guided Dr. Moseley's actions in the affairs of life did not spare the brilliant beauty when the flush of conquest waned and the charm of novelty expired. He aged rapidly under the incessant warfare they drifted into after a time, and Lady Violet soon discovered the mistake of throwing away the substance for the shadow.

Hugh Allerton's love had been true and lasting, and her devouring coquetry had lost him. This "May" and "December" very soon quarrelled considerably, and "December" decidedly got the worst of the battle, while "May," taking sedulously to novel-reading, tonics and horseback, conquered dull care, while "December," groaning with rheumatic pains, lost his appetite, sprightliness and vigour. Dr. Moseley

was far from being a blameless spouse; his vicious instincts increased with years, and her ladyship found that wealth, gaiety and splendour will not always atone for the want of love, while Dr. Moseley on his part conscientiously and daily regretted the loss of the faithful Tessa. She had sedulously laboured for his comfort, been meek under reproach, and was just the sort of "tame slave," mindless, ignorant and domesticated, a thoroughly selfish husband never appreciates until after he has lost his treasure. A cold and vindictive hatred gradually absorbed Lady Violet's breast. She watched the growing ailments that attacked the doctor without pity for the dimness of vision and want of appetite that were the slow but sure heralds of decay, while he learnt to fear and even tremble at the haughty, passionate woman who ruled him with a rod of iron, and whose soft-voiced pleasantries were, he knew, but masks of her contempt and aversion.

Of the two his love endured the longer, for it was well for him to fear someone, and the cruel woman who turned a deaf ear to his complaints, and snubbed him when he talked of "liver" and "heart disease," still possessed the beauty he had coveted and prized, and he winced under her scorn and derision, with the vague agony of knowing there was no escape, and it was his daily diet.

Moseley this time had indeed succeeded in what is vulgarly called, "catching a tartar."

It is surely pleasant to turn to another and a brighter picture. Lionel had but little difficulty in establishing his claim to the Allerton estate, and after a division of the property with his brother, he and Lady Constance were re-married at St. George's, Hanover Square, amidst a goodly host of witnesses and friends. And the ship that carried them for a time to a lovely home in the bright South, with its gorgeous sunsets, intense colours, and gaily-dressed peasants, never bore a happier pair on the ocean's breast than Sir Lionel Allerton and his bride. There, in romantic Italy, amid perfumed orange-groves, luxuriant scenery, and sweet-scented blossoms they revelled, amid the sunny hours, in bliss too deep for words. The past was but as a deep shadow to their lives, and the present borrowed tenfold brightness from its vanished gloom.

After a few months of pleasant rambling abroad they returned to Allerton Castle preparatory to the marriage of the Duchess of Chastelard's daughter with the Honourable Hugh.

The wedding presents had been arriving latterly, almost so to speak, in shoals at the duchess's West-end mansion; drawing-room clocks, jewellery, silver scent-cases, blue china, painted cups of inestimable value, and all those endless, costly nick-nacks the wealthy are never tired of showering as bridal offerings, flowed in one continual stream.

The bride was pronounced "a darling" by her young lady friends, the bridesmaids, each of whom received a gold and turquoise locket from the bridegroom, much to the envy of Miss Spink, who was unusually disagreeable at weddings, even if she had to appear delighted with everything.

Lady Constance, the day before the wedding, is chatting gaily with the bride-elect, who is admiring a beautiful ruby necklet, meanwhile Sir Lionel, in a distant corner of the room, is watching the evolutions of the latest novelty in the way of tops. Messrs. Cremer, of Bond Street, can produce, which his son and heir is driving hither and thither at railroad speed.

The earl is looking on with unmistakable enjoyment too. This small grandson, with the large dark eyes and soft silken hair, is his delight. The child now climbs up by his chair, and plays with his chain. Had the little fellow begged to have all the legs chopped off the tables, it is doubtful whether his grandpapa would not have endeavoured to fulfil his request.

The earl's life is happier now without the in-

domitable will and spirit of Lady Violet to interfere with his quiet tastes and wishes. Lady Constance has insisted on her father sharing their home at Allerton Castle, so he is far less lonely than had he remained at the Hall in solitary state, in fact he clings to these two, Lionel and Constance, as the sunset of his life draws nigh, deeming them his best earthly blessings.

The Duchess of Chastelard, majestic and patrician as of old, is thoroughly contented with the match, and hopes Anastasia will bear herself with becoming dignity on the august occasion. Her present will be pearls, of inestimable value, and these will be worn by the bride on the morrow.

Some excitement is just now caused even in a set so proverbially emotionless as this, by Miss Spink's information that "the wedding dress has arrived," and the ladies forthwith sail away to inspect that elaborate work of art, satin and flowers. The earl draws his chair closer to Lionel's, and the little child cries:

"Me go now to my papa; me tired of ee," delivered with the candour of extreme youth and mild inappreciation of watch-ticking.

"I have had bad news of Lady Violet," the earl is saying in a whisper, as the child runs after a ball Lionel has thrown it; she talks about wishing to visit me at the Hall for a change; things must be going very wrong with Violet to look upon a visit there as a boon.

"And what do you intend doing?" asked Lionel.

"I mean to run over to Brussels after the wedding and look her up; she speaks of Moseley's ill-health as quite wearing her out. He is now reduced to a Bath-chair, in fact a confirmed invalid."

"That will not suit her ladyship," said Lionel, smiling a little. "And now I expect this news of Hugh's marriage with Anastasia will upset her afresh. She was at heart, I do believe, somewhat fond of him. She eloped with Moseley more out of pique than anything else. However, it's done now, and cannot be altered."

Meanwhile chaotic exclamations in feminine tones were heard in every ascending key from the boudoir. Madame "Claire de Lune," the fashionable Court milliner, had produced a wedding dress of so novel and bizarre a character, but withal so exquisitely tasteful and elegant, the duchess expressed her approval on two separate occasions, after a pause of three minutes between each, that was duly impressive and weighty.

Miss Spink, spiteful to the last, thought that the Princess Carlovitz, with whom she had lived for three years as companion immediately after the death of her dear father, Colonel Spink, considered Madame Stephanotis, of St. James's Street, far superior in point of taste and elegance of design, for Madame Stephanotis only made for the nobility and courts, whereas Claire de Lune had been known to take orders for dresses from Manchester manufacturers' wives. A fact that had made the Princess Carlovitz shake her head in disgust, and decide in favour of Stephanotis, who was more select and extravagant.

But all this passed unheeded by the ladies; the taste of the wedding dress spoke for itself, even if the bill failed to do so, and Anastasia remarked that the Princess Carlovitz generally looked over-dressed and theatrical, thereby scoring one against Miss Spink, whose prudence and respect for the duchess's handsome salary, however, came to her aid in time, and disposed her to apparently agree with the fiancée.

Hugh Allerton had no reason to regret his choice, or wish that the lovelier but haughtier Lady Violet had been faithful. His bride possessed bright wit, purity of principles, and a kind heart, and was formed to cheer the home circle as much as she adorned society.

Many a heart is, we know, caught in rebound, and his sunny nature soon conquered the depression caused by disappointment and coquetry, and after all, the heart-wounds created by women of the Lady Violet type are hardly ever deep or lasting; to escape from the worthless is

always a relief; the chains of garlanded roses with which they bind their victims can be snapped and broken at will. How can a woman be prized or esteemed who cares no more for the hearts she has won and entrapped than she does for the carved figures on the handle of her fan?

Anastasia looked youthful, sweet and fair in her wedding-dress and veil; she was rather slender and petite, her clustering hair falling in natural curls about her shoulders, and this abandon suited her aerial, delicate prettiness; the myrtle and orange blossoms that were gracefully twined about the satin trembled beneath the rich lace veil suggestive of the many agitating hopes and fears that small ladies on these occasions, and in which as a rule vanity has its full share.

"I hope you will be happy, dear," Lady Constance is saying, kindly regarding Anastasia with earnest eyes, and thinking may be of that first stormy wedding years ago, when she and Lionel had been torn from each other.

"Happiness is always rather uncertain," Miss Spink philosophises; "but let us say we sincerely hope, yes, and trust, the dear bride may find, as each year advances, a husband's love increases and—"

But here Miss Spink's feelings are too much for her, and she dissolves in tears.

"Hugh is delightful," the bride answers, placing her arm round Lady Constance, "and if we are only half as happy as you and Lionel always seem, we shall be the envy of all the other couples we know."

"Anastasia, my child, do not gush," the duchess says, majestically; "that sort of thing suits the middle classes, but do pray let us have no scene to-morrow; remember the high and exalted position you fill and don't descend."

"That was precisely what the princess used to say to me," adds Miss Spink, who was always hysterical and verbose at weddings, "when I couldn't bear to pass the Horse Guards after my dear father's death without emotion, only she knew my position was humble."

"Suppose you ring the bell and order the carriage, Miss Spink," says the duchess, severely; "why will you be so chatty, it bores me just now. Anastasia, my child, come to my room and look at the pearls."

Almost about the same time as the wedding-service was being performed at St. George's, Hanover Square, Dr. Moseley was encasing his much-diminished frame in a very substantial ulster, previous to taking his morning ride in his Bath-chair. He grew so weary of his two hours' mild reflection alone, that in perhaps an evil hour he thought of entreating her ladyship to accompany him at least some part of the way, and thus forego her morning flirtation on horseback with a fashionable French cavalry officer, who admired the daring of the brilliant Englishwoman more in the saddle than at the table d'hôte.

Dr. Moseley is standing before his dressing-table, while her ladyship is languidly turning over the pages of a French novel. He is wonderfully careful how he speaks, and has twice taken a deep breath ere making his venture.

Dr. Moseley never had possessed any very great share of what he called that puerile weakness, affection for the human species, but in his acutest twinges of rheumatic gout, he thought of Tessa more affectionately perhaps than he had ever thought of any other of her sex; in fact such is the perversity of the mee, there were moments when he felt half inclined to throw himself on her mercy, and escape from the "fangs of Bellisarius," for such he often playfully termed Lady Violet's clutches. She spoke at last, throwing aside her novel:

"May I inquire what you are waiting for? Your Bath-chair has been at the door nearly a quarter of an hour, and if you don't make haste the wind (laughing) will change to another quarter—possibly the east."

"Violet," he implored, absorbed in abstracting a small spot of mud from his ulster, "suppose, for a change, you accompany me?"

"Thanks; like a pet terrier, I suppose? Well, no, not exactly; besides, they will take you for



my father. A man at the ripe age of fifty can surely take care of himself."

She returned to her novel. Dr. Moseley, still extracting the tiresome spot of mud, said, in his old key:

"But suppose I insist?"  
"You tried that once before if I remember rightly. A man so afflicted never should try another's patience too long, and I don't know that I am too fond of invalids. Certainly not to the extent of making me forego my delicious ride on Mandarin for strolling by the side of a Bath-chair."

"That French cavalry officer is monstrously attentive," said Moseley, in a tone that seemed an attempt at rufianism.

"I am going to take him to see the bounds throw off when we go back to England and are staying in Warwickshire," said Lady Violet, lightly. "He has never seen an English hunting party. Ah, here he is, riding down the street. I must dress or we shall be late."

Dr. Moseley still lingered and watched his wife twist her magnificent hair into a hard coil under her riding hat.

"I could almost bring myself to wish Mandarin broke your neck," he said, savagely.

"Thanks; that is so kind," she said, in her mocking way, flipping the dust off her habit with her coral-handled riding-whip; "but he's the very best piece of equine machinery going, and mon ami remember," she went on, approaching him as he limped to the door, "that when a man has lost the use of his legs and one arm and comes to a Bath-chair, he is a good deal at other people's mercy. An revoir."

She passed him in her youth and grace, and long before he had reached the last stair Lady Violet had been swung into the saddle by the gallant French officer, whose compliments never lacked fine lights and shades, and who found her mirth and wit unconquerable and brilliant.

After a long and breathless gallop Lady Violet turned her cynical face to her companion, and said, with just the same merriment as she had discussed the principal characters of high comedy performing the previous evening at the theatre:

"What do you think was the last domestic arrangement proposed by L'Ours?" (Such was the hapless Moseley now christened by both.)

The Frenchman shook his small, neat head.

"That I should walk by the side of the Bath-chair like a tame cat."

"Delicious," laughed the cavalry officer. "Otel never could have meant it?"

"But he did, and added a final benediction on my refusal that he hoped Mandarin would break my neck."

They both laughed again—laughter which Dr. Moseley heard, as they nearly rode over him, in their vivacious unconcern on the return journey.

But underneath all this heartless mockery discontent reigned supreme, and when Lady Violet read the day after in the "Times" over a late breakfast at the fashionable hotel in Brussels, that her old lover, Hugh Allerton, had married the daughter of the Duchess of Chastellard, and afterwards herself witnessed the happy pair flushed and radiant as they drove under her hotel windows, laughing and talking in gay unrestraint and affection, she endured those pangs which are the bitterest ever realised on earth, of feeling she had underprized the worth of a noble nature, and that Hugh Allerton was worthy of her highest regard and esteem. The matrimonial stakes she had played for had not been worth the winning.

It is night, cloudless and serene, and Sir Lionel Allerton's son has grown to be a brave, manly school-boy, while a little fair-haired sister with deep shady blue eyes, dressed in white muslin for her first "child's" party, is waiting while her mamma fastens a blue ribbon in her sunny hair, then turns and lays her hand on her son's dark curls.

Lady Constance is not much changed by the lapse of years. There are a few lines upon the brow such as ever linger on the faces of those women who have known their deepest sorrows in their youth, but there is a youthful buoyancy in her movements, a glad elation which proclaim a heart at rest.

After parting embraces have been given to her children, and she has seen them drive off in the carriage in the highest spirits, she saunters under the lordly avenue of oaks that are the admiration of all visitors to Allerton Castle, and meets her husband Sir Lionel on the terrace, who smiles with pleasure at her approach.

"Have you strolled out to dream in the moonlight as in your girlhood's days?" he says, playfully, and the modulated voice is no less caressing than of old. "Ah, my Constance, few men have had such benefits showered upon them as I have had."

His wife has linked her arm in his, and gently presses it in response. The moonlight falls on them both as they pass amid the dark shrubberies, and its beams seem to carry a blessing. Their shadows are distinct on the broad walk.

"Tell me, my wife, is not our life as perfect as any human destinies can well be? Children, friends, health and wealth, do not all these blessings call for the most fervent gratitude?"

Lady Constance glanced into his deep and impassioned eyes.

"I sometimes think this happiness is too great, that it must fade, Lionel," she whispered. "It breathes of Eden not of earth, and coming after our heavy sorrows, it has an intensity of rapture, not without pain; a sacred unity; a devotion; a love so great, my husband, I sometimes tremble lest it be lost."

For answer he folds her in his arms, and as the heavy blossoms are blown by the summer breeze into the marble fountain's basin at their side, and the fish leap startled by the disturbance, a kiss is pressed to her lips that seals her fears and tremor, as if fidelity so strong and deep can defy the inroads of time and decay, and love guide the Future with the same unerring truth and tenderness as the Past.

[THE END.]

## SCIENCE.

### THE PLAGUE IN RUSSIA.

THE condition of things in south-eastern Russia is unmistakably alarming. There has been several local outbreaks of plague in Turkey and in North Africa during recent years; and during the past year the movement of Turkish levies, the herding together of homeless refugees, the massing of Russian troops in unhealthy districts, and the return of troops from infected places, have furnished conditions extremely favourable for the development and spread of epidemic diseases. Whatever the cause, it is certain that an epidemic of a peculiarly malignant character began in the low country north of the Caspian Sea early in the fall, and has since steadily spread northward and eastward in spite of the unfavourable season and the most energetic attempts to isolate the infected regions.

At first the disease was described as a malignant typhus fever, a disease which has prevailed very largely among Russian troops in Turkey. Later reports from Russian physicians give as the characteristics of the existing epidemic the well known symptoms of the true plague, but describe them as extremely rapid in their development, the victims generally dying within ten hours of the first attack, sometimes within four hours. Ninety per cent of those taken with the disease die, and naturally the wildest alarm prevailed in the districts menaced. A large number of Cossacks who fled from one of the first infected villages were lately found frozen to death on the banks of the Volga. The dead lie unburied in the streets, and as soon as

warmer weather returns the festering corpses must materially aggravate the pestilence.

Liebermeister describes the true oriental plague—whose excursions into Europe during former centuries proved so terribly fatal—as a fever of a most acute and violent type, accompanied by buboes or carbuncles, often followed by a long train of disorders. Four stages of the disease are recognised: 1, The stage of invasion; 2, the stage of intense fever; 3, the stage of fully developed buboes; 4, the stage of convalescence.

The first stage begins suddenly, sometimes with fever. The general health is seriously disturbed. There is great bodily and mental weakness, headache, dizziness; face pale and flabby, features distorted, eyes languid, speech awkward, gait staggering; nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea occur. This stage lasts from a few hours to one or more days. The change from this to the second stage is marked by fever, usually beginning with a chill, and followed by extreme lassitude and fever, with its attendant consequences. Soon the patient passes into a well formed typhus condition, with delirium, passing on to stupor. The tongue becomes dry, cracked, hard; the tongue, teeth, lips, and nostrils, are covered with a dark mucus or with soot black crusts; cardiac weakness or paralysis follows. After two or three days buboes appear and the third stage begins. The fever diminishes, and a sticky, offensive perspiration covers the body. The pulse becomes fuller and less rapid, and the mind grows clearer. Buboes now appear on the groin, with carbuncles on the back of the neck and other parts of the body, and gangrene.

Convalescence begins between the sixth and tenth days, and is often protracted by continued suppuration of the buboes. Among the sequelae of the disease are enumerated parotitis, furuncle, abscesses of the skin and muscles, pneumonia, protracted fever with continued typhus condition, dropsy, partial paralysis, mental disturbance, &c. Genuine relapses also take place. Death may occur during any stage of the disease, though generally between the third and fifth days. The mortality is greater than that of any other epidemic disease. At first almost all of the sick die; and for long periods the mortality may range between 70 and 90 per cent.

The manner in which the disease spreads is not clear. It is certain, however, that no efficient protection is known for those who cannot isolate themselves absolutely from infected districts. The only successful treatment hitherto found has been rigid quarantine, with the most pitiless isolation of the sick or exposed. The disease must be stamped out as soon as it begins, if need be with the utter extermination of infected communities and the burning of their villages and effects. Liebermeister, writing when there was no probability of a recurrence of the plague in Europe, said, after describing the murderous measures which had been successfully employed to prevent the spread of the disease: "If we should ever again be threatened with an outbreak of the plague in Europe, we should know exactly what measures to adopt to ward off the danger. . . . It is scarcely necessary to mention, that owing to our imperfect knowledge of the nature of the plague and the mode of its development, as well as of the manner in which the contagion is carried, &c., it would be advisable rather to do too much than too little; and when there is any doubt it is better to follow the same way."

The black death which carried off so large a portion of the human race about the middle of the 14th century presented all the essential characteristics of the ordinary bubo plague, to which was added lung complications with expectoration of blood. Some have thought it a distinct disease; it is more probable, however, that it was the same pest, aggravated by other maladies—the natural result of so vast an accumulation of unburied corpses. Most of the recent epidemics of the plagues in the East and in North Africa have occurred during the warm damp weather of spring and early summer.

## A CHINESE REVIEW.

A CHINESE Review has just been witnessed and described by a correspondent of the Shanghai "Courier." The men, clad in uniforms of red and blue, were ranged into ranks, every tenth man holding a bright scarlet flag, while a sergeant in the middle gave the time to the advance by waving a huge crimson standard.

At the sound of a horn, which resembled the humming of a gigantic bee, the battalion prepared to receive cavalry. Out popped a soldier brandishing a pike, which he poked at an imaginary assailant, then, uttering a shriek like an owl, he flourished his shield, turning a somersault, and trippingly retired to the ranks.

When everybody had popped out, brandished and poked his pike, shrieked like an owl, thrown a somersault and retired, the big horn hummed once more, the soldiers formed in a square, and one of them danced gravely forward, throwing out his right leg with a graceful jerk, then bounding backward he again danced forward, this time throwing out his left leg.

Then he jumped, he waltzed, he capered, he pranced, he turned head over heels, rolled himself well in the dust, which rose in clouds, stood on the back of his neck while he flourished his legs in the air, recovered himself, grasped wildly with his arms at nothing in particular, made a grotesque curtsy to the viceroy, and retired. With this martial spectacle the review concluded.

## A RUSSIAN HERO.

OR,

## Marko Tyre's Treason.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

It is the part of real bravery not to under-value one's peril, and Marko did not shrink, therefore, from accepting in all its horror the situation in which he found himself, thus drifting out into the Gulf of Finland.

But when the first shock of this realisation was over, then it was that his natural instinct of self-preservation asserted itself, and all the rare energy and self-possession of his nature came to his assistance.

"Certainly, I am drifting out to sea," he repeated to himself, as he marked again the direction in which lay the lights of the city. "But the entrance to the port is narrow, and I may drift near enough to the light-house to make myself heard by the keeper."

In those days, as now, there stood a light-house upon one of the points at no great distance from the mouth of the Neva—a rude structure, which was also a police station, but the hope of our hero's making himself heard in that quarter, as he drifted past, was without the least probability in its favour.

"And then," mused Marko further, "as I shall naturally follow the strongest set of the current, and so keep in mid-channel, I can hardly fail to encounter any boat or other craft that may be on its way into the harbour."

Thus, almost as quick as a flash, and despite the full perception he had taken of his situation, our hero had already two well-defined hopes—the hope of being heard at the light-house, and of being picked up by any craft making or leaving the bay.

And with these two hopes, with all his strength and energy to back them, it would have been strange if he had not at once made up his mind for a brave battle!

"As to this thing," and he grasped his life-preserver firmly, "it is evidently made of iron, and is intended to remain for weeks in the water or even to receive severe bruises against a rock, without in the least degree losing its good qualities!"

The first of these reflections was true enough.

The life-preserver was made of sheet iron, in the form of a hollow and circular tube, as he had seen before leaving the deck of the corsair and trusting himself to it.

There were stout cords attached to it by which the most delicate or timid person could support himself, and the entire apparatus had been coated with a preparation of tar or paint, so that it was not likely to rust or otherwise lose its good qualities even by long immersion in the water.

This much, then, was patent and plausible in Marko's calculations.

But we shall soon see how terribly he was mistaken in the trust he reposed upon the frail apparatus to which he had confided his very existence.

For a time all went well enough, to be sure, the life-preserver continuing to float like a feather, and the waters around our hero remaining too calm to inspire him with any apprehension on their account.

It even seemed to Marko that he was able, by using his hands and feet freely, to exercise a certain direction over his support, although, as has been already indicated, he had cherished a greater degree of hopefulness than his situation would warrant.

Under all these circumstances, therefore, Marko was borne seaward with a constantly increasing rapidity, as he became more and more exposed to wind and current, but also with a constantly rising hopefulness.

The night not merely remained pleasant, but he was not seriously chilled by the water, which in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg is, however, always too cool even in the warmest summers for comfortable bathing.

"And even if I should drift past the point and the light-house," he reflected, "the Gulf of Finland is full of islands, and it will be strange if I am not carried to some of them, or paddle my way to them."

As in the case of all the preceding hopes he had conceived, there was a fair plausibility in this latest one, and so our hero went on his way with a degree of philosophy that could hardly in the first place have been expected.

"Evidently I am being carried to the north side of the channel," he mused, after a long and careful survey of every light within sight. "So much the better."

As limited as had been his experiences upon the water, Marko knew that the whole north western side of the harbour was occupied by a shoal, and that the shores adjacent were occupied by numerous fishermen. Such was as much the case in the days of which we are writing as at present. The imperilled youth was quick to see, therefore, that it would be doubly wise for him to make—so far as was possible—in the direction of this shoal and of those fishermen, and to this object he accordingly bent all his efforts.

More and more did it become apparent, as he continued to drift seaward, that his course was constantly acquiring nothing from the combined effects of the winds and currents, and that consequently his prospects of reaching the great shoal somewhere to the northward of the point referred to were very good indeed. Upon this point there is now a light-house, but in those days it was otherwise, and hence Marko could not look for assistance from his kind in that quarter.

"I shall certainly reach the shoal," he finally said to himself, after a new scrutiny of the few lights now remaining visible on the different shores around him.

The relief given him by this conviction can be imagined. For the first time since leaving the "Alexina," all trace of which had long since faded out of sight behind him, did he draw a long breath.

But even as he thus reached, as he supposed, a decided promise of eventual safety, he was startled by a strange, quick bubbling of air in the placid water over which his face hung suspended, and all at once he heard a singular rattling and rushing of water within the hollow

and circular tube of sheet-iron to which his life had been adventured.

What did it mean—that bubbling of air and that rushing of water? The startled youth raised himself erect in the water with electrical quickness as he mentally asked this question.

Only too soon came the answer! The life-preserver was filling! The air continued to bubble out—the water to gurgles in! Clearly the apparatus had sprung a leak!

With a quickness born of a wild sense of peril, Marko passed his hands over the rim of the life-preserver, and on the instant discovered a hole nearly large enough to admit the end of his finger.

And now all the sinister circumstances of his departure from the corsair vessel came back to him, with greater force and significance than ever.

At a glance he saw all the plot of which he had been the object, and all the peril by which he was now menaced.

The life-preserver had originally been stout and staunch enough, but holes had been bored into it purposely, and these holes had been lightly and insecurely plugged, or possibly merely covered with a thin coating of glue, or lack, or some similar substance which would soften with brief contact with water!

This was the trap which had been set for him! This the secret of his release from the corsair! This the secret of the sinister mockery Lieutenant Argolin had displayed at the instant of that departure!

The thrill of apprehension that passed through the soul of our hero at these perceptions can be imagined.

Still, he did not lose for an instant his presence of mind. Covering, with the end of his finger, the hole he had discovered in the life-preserver, he watched and listened for further developments, at the same time reflecting. He even noticed—what he had previously failed to do—that several small pieces of drift-wood, including an end of plank, had joined cortege to one another and to his life-preserver, as was natural, and he was not long in laying hold of these raft fragments.

Nor was he an instant too soon, as the case eventuated.

To the hole he had plugged with his finger was soon added another and another, and then all at once an indefinite number, as the treacherous substance by which they had been plugged yielded to the softening effects of the water.

If he had possessed as many hands as Briareus he would not have been able to cover these numerous apertures so completely as to exclude the water, which poured into the interior of the life-preserver, as the air came bubbling forth.

A few surging movements followed, which almost resembled the convulsions of a human being, and then the life-preserver went down like a stone, and was so far followed by our hero—in consequence of the abruptness of the plunge—that he disappeared entirely under the water.

Clinging fast, however, to the new fragments of drift-wood he had gathered during the wild voyage, and retaining his presence of mind, he quickly raised his face and a portion of his head above the surface, and drew in a long respiration.

Fortunately the waters continued calm, and when several waves had passed without interfering with his breathing, he experienced a hope—by which he had momentarily been abandoned, and naturally enough—that there was still at least a solitary chance for him.

To his great joy, as he thus hung suspended in the waves, he encountered a larger piece of drift-wood than he had previously secured, and one that permitted him to raise his head entirely out of the water.

And within a few minutes thereafter, by keeping a sharp lookout around him, he had added still other fragments to his former supply, and became so well buoyed and sustained that he was able to dismiss all fear of immediate drowning.



Add to this that the line of his drift continued favourable, and it will be seen that Marko had every reason to be thankful that his situation was no worse.

The light in a distant light-house had now become a sufficient indication of his whereabouts, and he was cheered to see that his theory of reaching a shoal to the northward was being every instant strengthened.

In due course, in fact, his bearings from the light—nearly north, and a couple of miles away—were such as to inspire him with the hope of having reached the edge of the shoal, or of some outlying spit belonging to it, and he accordingly sounded from minute to minute by lowering his feet as much as possible—even until his head was immersed—and, at length he was rewarded, his feet touching the bottom!

To describe the thrill that contact gave the weary youth is simply impossible.

Exerting all his might, he continued his advance a few moments, and then sounded again.

The water was now, at least, a foot shallower than before, so that he could stand upon the bottom and still maintain his head above water.

"At last!" was his audible cry, as he rested a moment. "I am saved! A little further on I shall find the water shallower, and so gain the shore!"

Resuming progress, he paddled a few rods further, still clinging to his frail supports, and then felt again for the bottom.

To his horror and consternation, he could not find it! It was in vain that he lowered himself completely under water—the bottom eluded him!

Exerting himself with the energy of desperation, he kept his supports together and drifted on again, sounding, from time to time, for the bottom.

"If I find footing again," he said to himself, almost despairingly, "I shall know enough to remain upon it!"

As if the vow had been heard, at the very next effort to touch the bottom he promptly found it.

He had drifted over another spit of the great shoal, and one that was even more favourable than the one he had abandoned, his head and a portion of his chest being now out of the water.

"Now, then," he gasped, still clinging to his fragments of drift-wood, "I will let well enough alone. There may be deep water all around—possibly a broad channel between me and the shore occupied by those fishermen. But here I have foothold, and here I will stay. Possibly I can make those fishermen hear me. At the worst they will see me in the morning."

Planting himself as firmly as possible upon the shoal, he called with all the strength of his lungs for assistance, and then paused for a response.

None being vouchsafed him he resumed calling again, and thus he continued to do at intervals, for more than an hour, and until his voice was lost in over-exertion, but all in vain.

No one heard him—no one came to his relief—and to crown the horror of his situation, he suddenly noticed that the water was rising around him.

"The tide has changed!" he gasped, with another thrill of consternation. "I shall soon be adrift again!"

This conviction was only too well founded! Gradually but surely the water was rising around him!

The buffetings of the wild waves soon commenced lifting him from his precarious footing!

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

It will naturally be supposed that Marko, as he stood shivering in the waters of the Baltic, in instant danger of being washed away, was thinking of the perils by which he was environed.

Nothing of the kind!

He was simply thinking what a fool he had been to have anything to do with Girgas Dal.

"Here is a villain who tried to intercept Roda on her way to town," he mused, "and who tried to murder me the other night on the river! His whole character and record is as base as anything can be! And yet I am such a simpleton as to go sailing with him, and must even smoke one of his drugged cigars when I have plenty of cigars of my own in my pocket! I really deserve to drown!"

We must do Marko the justice to remark that he by no means deserved these self-reproaches.

His generous nature had been prompt to make allowance for Dal, on the score of the villain's burning passion for our heroine. Even a good man, with a desperate love-affair on his hands, is apt to act on many an occasion very much like a rascal. Happy himself, Marko had been touched by Dal's unhappiness. This was the first natural basis of all the consideration and kindness our hero had extended.

In the second place, Marko had long had too keen a sense of Dal's capacities and resources for wickedness to wish to drive him to despair. Our hero was of course inaccessible to fear, but he well comprehended how dangerous a man could be who, like Dal, had been an officer of the household, and had his partisans, besides being familiar with all the ways of the palace.

There was even a deeper motive than any of the preceding underlying Marko's action.

It had long been his belief that Dal was not so sound in his loyalty to Catherine as he had always professed to be, or, in other words, that he was more or less affiliated with the conspirators by which the throne of Catherine was menaced.

In view, therefore, of all these varied and important motives for "speaking him fair," we submit that Marko had not erred so much in his dealings with Dal as he was inclined to believe at that hour of bitter self-reproach and peril.

As to the poisoned cigar, he had never dreamed that it was possible to drug anyone in this manner. This measure was, in fact, a suggestion from Florette, the French maid with whom he had been so friendly in the palace, and who had picked up the idea during a visit to the French capital. And as to accepting a cigar from Dal, when he had plenty of his own in his pocket, this was a very simple act of conciliation, and one in perfect harmony with the line of conduct Marko had adopted.

Add to all these motives his strong desire to call Dal back to usefulness and honour, and it will be seen that our hero had really nothing to reproach himself for, although he would have acted very differently had he more fully and fairly understood the man with whom he was dealing.

The rising tide soon buffeted him with such force, that he found he was rapidly exhausting his strength by his efforts to maintain himself upon the shoal he had encountered.

"I shall have to get out of this very soon at the latest," he thought, "and why not go now, before my strength is exhausted?"

He struck out at once.

At the end of a long swim he came to an island upon which were fish reels and other signs of occasional occupancy, although at this moment he saw nothing of either dwellings or inhabitants. And, as good luck would have it, he had scarcely reached the shore of this island, when he encountered one of those small row-boats so generally employed by fishermen.

His whole mien changed on the instant.

"A sail, as I live!" he ejaculated, as he investigated the interior of the boat. "And the wind is in the right direction. All I have to do is to push off and vanish!"

His equanimity came back to him by the time he found himself bounding lightly over the waves on his way back to the mouth of the Neva.

In due course he took his way back to the palace.

The hour was late, and the palace was closed for the night, but Marko still possessed the ring which had been given him by the empress to insure his admittance at any hour of the night,

and at the end of a brief delay he found himself again in Catherine's presence.

At his advent, so bedraggled, with a countenance so expressive of what he had been through, a feeling akin to alarm took possession of the sovereign's mind.

Her looks sufficiently attested her wondering curiosity.

"I have been anxious about you, General Tyre," she said. "What on earth has happened?"

"Your majesty shall soon hear," replied Marko, accepting the chair to which the empress invited him by a gesture. "But first allow me to ask if anything has been seen of Dal at the palace in the course of the evening?"

"Dal? Not to my knowledge. Is he not lying helpless at the residence of his aunt, the Countess Sabielin?"

"He was certainly wounded severely by the Baroness Gradowsky, but he is none the less active. Before I report his proceedings, however, I would like to be sure that the baroness is safe?"

"Why not send for her, and let her hear the report you evidently have to make of Dal's proceedings?" suggested the empress.

"Certainly, if your majesty would be so kind."

The empress touched a bell which was instantly responded to by the appearance of one of her ladies in waiting.

A message was at once sent to our heroine demanding her presence and scarcely a minute had elapsed before she was present.

"It seems General Tyre has had an adventure with Dal this evening, Baroness," said the empress, when greetings had been exchanged, "and we have sent for you to hear with me a report of the matter."

Pausing only long enough to see that his betrothed was comfortably deposited in one of the large easy-chairs that ornamented the apartment, Marko hastened to relate all that had befallen him since he left the palace. The surprise of his hearers was intense.

"This certainly throws new light upon the knave's character," commented Catherine. "For him to get out of bed while under the doctor's care, after being so severely wounded, and to come here and go through all these piratical and murderous schemes without so much as a limp or a groan, shows that he is made of sterner material than we imagined!"

"He's more cunning, too," said Roda, "as that drugged cigar establishes!"

"He did not wince during our walk to the quays," said Marko, "and yet every step must have cost him tortures, if he is as severely wounded as the great flow of blood you noticed, Roda, would lead us to imagine."

"In any case," resumed the empress, "he is now unmasked as a traitor. And the question now arises whether we shall take him in hand upon what we have discovered, or whether we shall play a deeper game. If you keep out of sight, General Tyre, a few days, and leave Dal and his party to suppose you are dead, we may secure some very queer discoveries or revelations. Suppose we take this course? You and the baroness can join General Gradowsky—all of you in disguise, if you choose—and you can improve the occasion to make a thorough search for Mrs. Gradowsky."

"I like the idea, your majesty, if it were not for being absent at a moment when my presence seems so necessary here."

The empress smiled darkly.

"I think I can take care of myself in your absence, mes enfants," she said, with one of her most serene and gracious smiles. "I am doubtless alive to the fact that there are plenty of dangers in my path, and I will take my measures accordingly. I give you both leave of absence for a week, upon the same terms as General Gradowsky, and trust your mutual efforts will be crowned with the grandest success."

The conversation had reached this point when there came a brisk, excited knock upon the door at which Golos was usually in attendance.

"See who it is," General," ordered the empress.

The new-comer proved to be Golos. He was pale and excited.

"If your majesty pleases," he said, advancing into the apartment, "I dare not take the responsibility of turning away a dying woman who has caused herself to be brought here on a stretcher for what she claims to be a matter of great importance."

"A dying woman?" murmured the empress. "I have allowed her to be brought into the ante-chamber," said Golos.

In effect groans were heard beyond the door by which the chamberlain had entered.

"Who is she?" asked Catherine.

"She says she is Madame Flossky, a nurse in the service of your majesty many years ago," answered Golos.

"Flossky!"

The empress started as if a viper had bitten her.

An unusual flush overspread her features.

"Who is with this woman?" she asked.

"Only the two men who brought her, your majesty."

"Admit them."

Roda and Marko made a movement to retire from the apartment.

"Remain, both of you," enjoined Catherine.

"I am not quite at my ease about the character of this visit. I may need you, General Tyre, if Dal or some similar genius is thus showing his hand."

No time was lost by Golos in introducing the woman who had thus demanded admittance.

She lay upon a sort of stretcher which had been hastily improvised and presented a picture of distress, both mental and physical, that at once banished from the minds of the empress and her friends all thoughts of stratagem and danger.

"You can leave us," said Catherine to the two bearers of the dying woman. "Golos, take charge of them."

The two retired promptly, and the empress turned her attention to her visitor, whose groans had ceased, and who lay in a sort of stupor, as if momentarily overpowered by the excitement of finding herself in Catherine's presence.

"Bring the little bottle from the top of my dressing-case, Baroness," ordered the empress. "She needs a drop to revive her."

Roda hastened to comply.

"I remember the poor creature well, Baroness," continued the empress, after she had administered to the sufferer a few drops from the bottle in question. "She was a great favourite at one time, both with Peter and myself, but she finally fell into disfavour with us both, my husband accusing her of being too devoted to me, and I in turn believing that she was too entirely at the orders of Peter. Perhaps I did her great wrong, but I half suspected her at one time of attempting to poison me in Peter's interest. But, see, she is reviving! Let us see what errand has brought her here," and a whole army of shadows came and went upon Catherine's brow. "She must certainly have some powerful motive to bring her here at such a moment."

At the end of a brief interval of silence, the visitor groaned dismally and opened her eyes, looking wildly around. Her gaze was not long in fixing itself upon the kindly but inquiring face of the empress.

"Your majesty will forgive me for this intrusion," said the visitor, who was, visibly, very near her end. "I have a secret of the gravest importance to reveal to your majesty's own ears."

The flush receded from the features of the empress, leaving them as pale as marble.

"Perhaps Mrs. Flossky will be more at her ease if you leave me, mes enfants," she said, forcing a smile, as she turned to the lovers.

"You may wait in the next apartment."

The young couple withdrew, but not without a feeling of wonder at the agitation Catherine had already exhibited.

"Speak, my good woman," enjoined the em-

press, as soon as she found herself alone with her visitor. "Be calm, and say it all in as few words as possible."

"Your majesty—will not harm me?" gasped the dying woman, stirring feebly.

"Harm you? I harm a woman in your situation? Your mind must be wandering! Calm yourself, Mrs. Flossky, and proceed."

"In a word, then—that boy did not die!"

The effect of those few words was like the crash of a bomb. The empress leaped to her feet by a startled impulse she could not master.

"Not die?" she repeated, in a whisper that bristled with concentrated passion. "Nor die? Then what became of him?"

"I sent him away into the country, at the commands and threats of your husband—of Peter! He said he would kill both me and the child if I didn't. Your majesty will remember the time—the 17th of August, 1756—twenty-two years ago. Your majesty will recall how ill you were for several weeks at that time. In an insane fit of rage the emperor gave you poison. He refused to own the child, or to see it. You lay for three days at the point of death—your majesty will remember. I lost my head under the threats of the emperor, and consented to do his bidding. I took the child—and a noble boy he was—to my sister in the country—to Mrs. Merensky—and told your majesty, when you became strong enough to ask for your boy, that it had died within an hour after its birth, and I even showed your majesty a little dead body that I had procured from the hospital."

The startling narration was interrupted by a cry from Catherine that seemed scarcely human.

"Woman!" she shrieked, shaking her clenched hand at Mrs. Flossky, "you know not what you have done! That child was the one great dream of my existence! My life's one sweet romance! an incarnate revenge and hatred! I would have given my own life, woman, for that of the boy thus sent me!"

She swept stormily to and fro in the apartment, with fearful eyes and agitated mien, seeming oblivious, for the moment, of Mrs. Flossky's presence.

A groan from the sufferer called the empress back to her side.

"And yet you dared to deceive me, wretched creature!" cried Catherine, in an awful voice of reproach. "You dared to take advantage of my helplessness to obey the orders of my dog of a husband! Miserable woman!"

She paused, drawing back in horror, as she suddenly remembered the effect of her violent words and mien upon her visitor.

"Forgive me, Mrs. Flossky," she cried, rushing forward and kneeling beside the helpless figure, startled by the convulsions with which it was shaken. "I know not what I said! Speak to me! You say that my boy did not die? Then you took him to your sister in the country? Tell me all quickly! Is my son still alive? Is—"

The words died away upon the lips of the empress, and a look of horror and agony, and regrets unutterable settled upon her face. It was only inanimate clay that she looked upon. Mrs. Flossky was dead!

(To be Continued.)

UNDER the will of Mrs. Hannah Brown, for many years the companion of Baroness Burdett-Coutts, the personality has been proved under £70,000, most of which is left to the Baroness.

EVERYONE who has any knowledge of savage and warlike tribes like the Zulus must know their marvellous capacity for undergoing fatigue, for supporting long fasts, and for making long and rapid marches. Indeed, it is a notorious fact that a Zulu warrior, fully equipped, can travel at the rate of from eight to eight and a half miles per hour, and that for four or five consecutive hours.

## MADAME THE FARMER.

THE wife of a French farmer has a great deal to do, although she does not work in the field. As all the domestics are at work out of doors, madame must prepare food for the men. For dinner she gives them vegetable soup, or occasionally rice soup with milk in it. After the soup there will be omelets—I am told that it will take three or four for so many men—and there will be bread and cheese, salad and wine. The cheese is made from milk after the cream is taken off, or from goats' milk, pure. The salad is dressed with vinegar, walnut oil, salt, pepper, and a little garlic. At four o'clock they have in the field a luncheon of bread, cheese, salad and wine. They drink wine with every meal, rarely drinking water, which they do not like. Harvest hands get meat once a day—at breakfast there is a bit of bacon in the soup, except on Friday—say something more than a pound for so many men. Then there are bread and cheese at breakfast. The supper is at eight, and is soup, bread and cheese again. After harvest, they will have the revel. This is a supper where madame the farmer will have a ham or shoulder boiled—for they call shoulders hams. Then they will have some other meat; if there are so many men, perhaps there will be a couple of rabbits—rabbits stewed with wine; and there will be, moreover, bread and salad and wine at the revel.

## THE ROYAL MARRIAGE.

THE following is a full description of the toilettes at the late Royal wedding:

THE BRIDE.—The bride wore a diamond necklace and diamonds in her hair. She wore a heavy white satin dress, a band of lace ten centimetres long encircling the waist. The skirt was sewn with lace thirty centimetres wide, and decorated with a bunch of myrtle-leaves, the emblem in Germany of the bridal state. The train was four metres long, and surmounted by a lace flounce one metre in width, in which a sprig of myrtle was fixed. The bridal veil was about three metres square, made of point d'Alençon lace, the design representing orange blossoms, roses, and myrtle-leaves intertwined. The handkerchief was made of the same material as the veil, and showed the same design, one corner being embellished with the Princess's monogram, the other with a Prussian eagle. The Princess wore a beautiful bridal wreath, and had a bouquet of white flowers in her hand.

THE BRIDESMAIDS.—The dresses worn by the ladies who were bridesmaids on the auspicious occasion were of rich white satin duchesse and white faille, with draperies of mousseline de soie elegantly embroidered with wild roses, buds and foliage; flowers artistically combined, showing the emblems of England, Prussia, Scotland and Ireland, completed the arrangement. The wild rose of England headed the design; Prussia's corn flower, the white heather and stag moss of Scotland, and Ireland's shamrock were mounted on to the same. The effect produced was strikingly beautiful, the eight ladies being dressed exactly alike. The taste and harmony which pervaded the whole arrangement were perfect, and elicited great admiration, nothing being required to complete the tout ensemble, which was pronounced perfect. Mrs. Stratton, of Piccadilly (niece of the late Sir Joseph Paxton), designed and executed the dresses.

THE QUEEN.—A dress and train of black silk, with a border of black terry velvet embroidered in black silk, and a white tulle veil surmounted by a diadem of diamonds. Her Majesty also wore a necklace and earrings of large diamonds, the Koh-i-Noor as a brooch, with a diamond pendant attached to it, containing a miniature of her Royal Highness Princess Alice, the Grand Duchess of Hesse; also the Riband and Star of the Order of the Garter, the Orders of Victoria



and Albert, the Crown of India, Louise of Prussia, and the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha Family Order.

**PRINCESS OF WALES.**—An exquisite toilette of oriental pearl-coloured brocade, richly embroidered in pearls, with ruffles of point d'Angleterre and narrow bands of sable. The train was composed of the darkest amethyst velvet, lined with richest oriental pearl satin, bordered in narrow sable. A smaller train of matchless point d'Angleterre, entirely covering the centre, was fastened on by large medallions of pearls. The corsage was profusely studded with pearls and diamonds. Her Royal Highness wore a tiara of diamonds, white ostrich feathers, and long tulle veil, and necklace of rows of pearls and diamonds. Their Royal Highnesses the Princess Louise, Victoria, and Maud of Wales were attired in dresses of oriental pearl-coloured brocade, with stomachers of Malines lace and ceintures of darkest amethyst velvet, over jupes of poul de soie of the same tint with small volants of Malines lace. The most picturesque group, and one long to be remembered, was formed by the Princess of Wales, surrounded by her youthful daughters, all charmingly attired in dresses of the same exquisite colourings. We have heard that the toilette of H.H.H. the Princess of Wales, and those of the young Princesses, which caused such general admiration, and many others worn on this occasion, came from the celebrated ateliers of Elise, 170, Regent Street.

**PRINCESS IMPERIAL OF GERMANY** (Princess Royal of Great Britain).—A magnificent train of rich ruby velvet, beautifully trimmed with the choicest Russian sable; the corsage was also of rich ruby velvet, and was ornamented with a stomacher of lace and pale pink poul de soie. The petticoat was composed of superb antique lace, elegantly draped over pale pink poul de soie. Headdress, a coronet of diamonds, plumes, and veil; ornaments, rubies and diamonds.

**DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH.**—A dress of pale pink satin, trimmed with rich point d'Alençon lace, and garlands of shaded roses. Train of pale pink brocaded satin, trimmed with point d'Alençon lace and bouquets of shaded roses; headdress, diamond diadem, feathers and veil; ornaments, necklace, brooch, and earrings of sapphires and diamonds. Orders, Victoria and Albert, Star of India, St. Catherine of Russia, House of Prussia, and the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha Family Order.

**PRINCESS CHRISTIAN.**—A train of rich pail velvet, trimmed with very fine silver fox, corsage and petticoat of velvet and satin the same colour, elegantly trimmed with a shaded embroidery of pail and gold beads, and fur to match the train. Ornaments, opals, pearls, and diamonds; headdress, a tiara of diamonds, veil, and plumes. Orders, the Victoria and Albert, the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the Indian Order, the Prussian for care of the wounded in 1871, St. Isabel of Portugal, and St. Catherine of Russia.

The lovely toilettes worn by the Imperial Princess of Germany (Princess Royal of Great Britain) and the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, and also other dresses worn during the marriage festivities, were supplied by the Misses Metcalfe, of New Bond Street.

**PRINCESS BEATRICE.**—A train of the palest blue velvet arranged after the period of Henri IV., with a velvet skirt opening upon a drawn satin under skirt, train lined and bordered also with satin; magnificent fine old lace and satin formed the trimming for body. Her Royal Highness's dress suited her admirably, the fine colouring together with the classical arrangement being so well adapted to face and figure like her Royal Highness's, in which sweetness and perfection of character are so predominant. Her headdress consisted of feathers, veil, and diamond stars; ornaments, diamond and pearl necklace, brooch, and earrings. Orders, Victoria and Albert, the Crown of India, the Riband and Star of St. Catherine of Russia, and the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha Family Order.

**PRINCESS PHILIP OF SAXE-COBURG AND GOTHA.**—A magnificent train and corsage of pale rose-coloured satin duchesse, trimmed horizontally with bouillonne of tulle and pearl embroidery, retenu par des touffe de pommier. Petticoat in white satin, embroidered with pearls in front, and draped with satin and pearl embroidery. Coiffure, feathers, flowers, and tiara of diamonds; ornaments, pearls and diamonds. This lovely toilette was made by Madame Flavie, of Bruton Street.

**THE DUCHESS OF TECK.**—This toilet was one of regal magnificence. The corsage and jupe were of the palest primrose and olive brocade, with plissés and draperies of olive satin, fastened with volants of the finest honiton lace; the train of the richest olive velvet, lined and bordered in ermine, was fixed on one shoulder with diamond clasps, and diamond stomacher on corsage. Her Royal Highness also wore a tiara of diamonds, lappets, ostrich feathers, and diamond necklace.

**DUCHESS OF ROXBURGH.**—A train and body of rich black satin and brocade velvet; the train was bordered with a handsome feather ruche, tulle and satin plissé, Louis XIV. period, petticoat of black silk elegantly draped with tulle, chenille embroidery, and satin. The whole effect was most recherche and highly distinguished by the courteous manner which characterised the noble wearer. Her grace's jewels were a tiara of diamonds, plume and veil, necklace of diamonds, also an ornament of jewels, unequalled in value, forming a stomacher.

**DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND.**—A magnificent toilette, consisting of gold and silver brocade, mixed with a new shade of scarious velvet and finest poul de venise. The corsage was trimmed with matchless rubies and diamonds, which blended beautifully with the new shade of velvet. Her grace wore a tiara of diamonds, white ostrich feathers, and gold and silver veil.

**MARCHIONESS OF SALISBURY.**—A picturesque dress of antique Louis XV. brocade, of a very pale rosea hue, with embossed wreaths and bouquets of myosotis and leaves. The jupe was composed of the darkest rosea velvet, draped in brocade, with festoons of myosotis satin. The corsage was of velvet, with a Louis XV. waistcoat of brocade and beautiful diamond ornaments. Headdress, tiara of diamonds, white plumes, and veil.

**MARCHIONESS CONTINGHAM.**—Toilette of mauve satin and costly antique lace, the skirt strewed with branches of natural mauve and white lilacs, and was truly one of the most recherche toilettes. Her ladyship also wore a tiara of diamonds, white feathers with veil, and branch of lilacs.

**COUNTESS OF BRADFORD.**—A lilac satin dress, covered with fine Brussels point flounces, arranged with scarves of lilac gauze, and agraffed with velvet and bows of a darker shade.

**COUNTESS MARIE MUNSTER.**—Dress of white duchesse satin, trimmed gauze de venise, gold beaded fringe and ruche, bronze and gold chenille flowers; train, lemon colour satin brocade, lined poul de soie to match, trimmed tulle and flowers. Headdress, plumes, flowers, and Malines tulle.

**COUNTESS OLGA MUNSTER.**—An elegant toilette of Hortense coloured duchesse satin and brocade, trimmed with pearl trimming and roses. Headdress, plumes and flowers.

**VISCOUNTESS CRANBROOK.**—Dress of Russian grey satin duchesse, draped with guipure lace and velvet of the same rich shade. Headdress, diamonds, plumes and lappets.

**LADY HARRIOT GRIMSTON.**—Train and corsage of pale grey satin broché, trimmed with tulle and satin; petticoat of grey satin, trimmed with handsome Brussels lace and pale pink chrysanthemums.

**LADY ELIZABETH BIDDULPH.**—Train and corsage of black and gold striped velvet, lined and trimmed with gold satin; gold satin petticoat, trimmed with black Brussels and satin bows.

**LADY CONSTANCE STANLEY.**—This toilette was remarkable for its elegance and distinction. It was composed of embossed velvet and satin bronze doré, trimmed with handsome guipure de Malte. The charming dress was most adapted to her ladyship's beauty.

**HON. MRS. FERGUSON** (of Pittfour).—A train and body of rich black satin brocade, trimmed with lace, tulle and satin, petticoat of satin tulle and fine Chantilly lace, draped with satin, and forming a bow on the right side, in which was placed a spray of exquisite diamonds. This dress was exceedingly handsome and greatly admired. Headdress, tiara of diamonds, feathers and veil; ornaments, diamonds and pearls.

This collection of lace belonging to the Princess Beatrice can hardly be equalled. It contains a part of that Alençon which was found in a lumber-room some years ago at St. James's Palace, and which is reputed to be worth about £20,000. It dates from the time of Henry VIII.

An American paper says that a new way of fastening on ladies' hats is to bore the tops of their ears, put in gold hoops, and have the hat strings tied through them. Thus, step by step we tread the pathway to perfection, and are the darkness of death envelopes all the world, man will have utilised his nose in holding up his pantaloon or pulling on his boots.

The Duke of Connaught's marriage is the seventh of the Queen's children, previous Royal weddings having been as follows:—The Princess Royal, January 25, 1858, in the Chapel Royal, St. James's; Princess Alice, July 1, 1862, at Osborne; the Prince of Wales, March 10, 1863, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor; Princess Helena, July 5, 1866, also at Windsor; Princess Louise, March 21, 1871, at Windsor; and the Duke of Edinburgh, January 23, 1874, in the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg.

The question of women's rights is undoubtedly one of the most paramount of the day. We have always advocated women's advancement, politically and socially, and put forth every argument that has occurred to us in order to prove they are in every respect equal to men. The latest proof is that given by La. La. at the Royal Aquarium; this talented lady of colour has given manifestations to the public that are in one sense quite convincing of her equality, nay superiority, to men in general, as during her performance she holds three gentlemen suspended in her teeth as if they were a bouquet, and there is no doubt she could sling up a fourth.

The charm of a compliment is thus illustrated; "Why do you look at me so, sir?" He said he was not aware of having done so, but she insisted. "I beg your pardon, but it's this eye, is it not?" lifting his finger to his left optic. "Yes, sir, it's that eye." "Well, my dear lady, that eye won't do you any harm. It's a glass eye, madame—only a glass eye. But I'm not surprised that even a glass eye should feel interested in so pretty a woman." The explanation and the compliment delighted her, and she married him soon after. But her husband returned and spoilt the romance.

We heard the following story told as an illustration of the free and easy manner of hotel-life in America, as we were travelling in "the cold meat" train the other evening. It was during the Exhibition, when accommodation was very scarce in New York, a traveller arrived late one night, and applied for a bedroom at an hotel, but was told every room was occupied. However, the applicant insisted on being put somewhere. "Wal," said the landlord, "if you don't mind an old woman being in the same room, you can go to number—". The stranger didn't mind the old woman one bit, and at once went off to the chamber mentioned. After a prolonged interval he sloped down to the bar, and calling the manager, remarked, "I guess that old woman's dead." To which the other simply answered, "Wal, stranger, I didn't say she wasn't. How did you find it out?"



[HIS QUEEN OF FLOWERS.]

## THE WAR OF THE ROSES.

"WHAT dress will you wear to Mrs. Hilton's this evening, Rose?" inquired a pleasant-looking young lady.

"I do not know, dear Carro; indeed I have not given it a thought, and would much rather remain at home than mingle with the gay to-night."

"Not attend the most splendid party of the season! Why, Rose Traverse, are you crazy, child? Stay at home, indeed, and give your famous rival, Rose Arlington, a chance to captivate your handsome Ernest? Rose, she is perfectly lovely—not your noble beauty, darling—but a tiny, blue-eyed, golden-haired fairy, beautiful as rose-tinted, evening clouds, or like one of those glorious crimson and gold sunsets we saw last year in the land of sunny skies—bright Italia. But pahaw! Rose, I cannot be poetical. I have mentioned the two most beautiful things my eyes ever rested upon, and now am at the 'end of my string,' always excepting the beautiful, slumbrous light in your own glorious dark eyes, darling. What ails your eyes to-night, Rose Traverse? Their look is weird and unearthly."

"I feel saddened, Carro. Emma Hade's foolish talk about Ernest's devotion to Miss Arlington last night has grieved me."

"Never heed her words, Rosie, dear; she is a mischief-maker, and would make trouble be-

tween you and Ernest Clare. The little vixen I could twist her neck off."

"Fie, fie, Carro! that is rough and unusual language from your sweet lips. But tell me—did you not think Ernest too devoted, as Emma said, to this attractive belle, when his hand and heart are pledged to another?"

"Well, he certainly was attentive to Miss Arlington; but she was quite as attentive to him—she did not give him a chance to leave her. I passed them during the evening, and Ernest made a movement as though about to join me, when la belle yellow hair chained him again, to answer some question regarding the gaieties of his 'beautiful city.' I foresee very plainly, Rosie, that I shall honour that deceitful little Arlington with my most cordial hatred."

"Not so fast, Carro. I think, for so very small a lady as you are, you are talking pretty large about this young stranger."

"You are right, Rosie. To use one of George's elegant expressions, I believe I have been talking rather 'high falutin'; but, Rose, you cannot imagine the wiles of that girl—remember you have only met her once. When Captain Acton came to claim her hand for a promised dance, she actually filled Ernest's arms so that he would be obliged to await her return—bouquet, fan, handkerchief, opera-cloak, and even her gloves. I had half a mind to send one of the servants with Miss Mason's compliments, and ask if he did not need someone to help him bear his burden."

"Oh, Carro Mason! you are incorrigible. You make me laugh, even while swallowing down a sob. I do not grieve because Ernest finds pleasure in the society of another—as you know I am not of a jealous nature—neither do I grieve because I have not moral courage to give up the love of Ernest Clare; but for the reason that it has shaken my faith in human nature. If Ernest with his noble soul and high, brave spirit, can be so easily won to forget the love of years, whom can we trust?"

"Bide a wee, sweet cousin, bide a wee. He loves not Rose Arlington; he loves but the bright crimson rose of his boyhood's idolatry—sweet Rose Traverse; he is but captivated by her wondrous beauty."

"I care not, Carro; I will not have a share in the heart which once was all my own. I will release him from the vows made in the old cathedral in Rome if they press too heavily upon his spirit; one word from his own lips, and he is free as air."

The cousins were in a sumptuous chamber in the house of Rose Traverse. Rich crimson damask curtains shaded the window, throwing a warm, ruddy glow over the two fair faces. A carpet of crimson and white, with flowers so rich in colouring, one could fancy Flora herself had flung her treasures over it with no sparing hand—rich clusters of crimson roses and convolvulus, mingled with the trailing myrtle, whose bright green contrasted beautifully with the glowing flowers, almost winning one to stoop and gather them.

Carro stood before the grate, with her forehead bent upon the marble mantel, beating an impatient tattoo upon the floor with her restless little feet. Rose sat before a rosewood writing-desk, thickly strewn with manuscript. Her magnificent black hair was pushed back from the white temples, and the crimson lips were tightly compressed; the sweet face wearing a look of weariness and pain. The rich glow on her cheek almost shamed the bright, rose-coloured dressing-gown which fell from the glistening shoulders. Her white hand almost flew over the paper till arrested by Carro.

"Rose, put away your writing, and let us to our toilet. Ernest will be here, and you know he dislikes to wait."

"I shall not go out to-night, but will assist you in one moment, Carro."

"Rose Traverse, I don't love you one bit; you are too provoking!" And Carro flung herself into a chair, saying, "I will not go unless you do—that I am determined on. You want to give the Arlington a chance to win from you the noblest heart the sun shines upon!" and glittering tears rolled over Carro's bright face.

Rose left her seat, and in one moment her arms were around the loving girl.

"Carro, I do not wish to grieve you, and would rather go with you than see these wasted tears. I do not feel like going into a crowd to-night, and was very anxious to finish this manuscript, and have it in the hands of the compositor at an early hour to-morrow; beside, I have promised to write a sketch and you know I never fail to meet an engagement. Ernest, too, he only comes because he deems it his duty, not from choice."

"Now, Rose, you wrong him. It is only in her presence that he feels the spell of this attractive beauty. Please, Rosie, come to-night, just to make me happy. I will copy all day to-morrow for you, if you do."

Rose could not withstand the pleading eyes, and sadly she gathered up the scattered papers and replaced them in the desk.

"I will go with you, Carro, if only for the sake of making my little cousin happy."

"How you seem to love those tiresome papers, Rose! One could fancy you had to write for a living."

"No, darling, I do not have to toil for my daily bread, but I have to write to satisfy the cravings of my restless heart, which is ever clamouring, write—write. I could no more keep from writing than you can keep from singing all day long, my happy Carro. I love to hear



Your rich voice, clear and sweet as the bulbul's song."

Carro flew round like a bird—first dressing the tiny feet in white satin slippers, that surely must have been handed down to her from Cinderella, so small and beautiful they were.

Rose stood before the mirror, and as she gazed upon her own rare loveliness, she murmured in a tone too low for Carro's busy ears:

"They tell me of my soul's lofty gifts, and yet they could not win my love—that would not change."

She removed the golden comb, and the glittering mass of shining hair fell rippling almost to her feet.

She smoothed it with her soft hand till it shone like the mirror in which she gazed, then the white fingers wandered through it and rapidly it grew into broad, massive braids, which she bound about her brow in the shape of a coronet, and gathering the whole into a heavy knot behind—the task was done. She robed her beautiful form in a dress of amber satin. She clasped a diamond necklace upon her snowy throat, the bright, glittering gems answering the light in her purplish black eyes. Taking from the wardrobe a white silk opera-cloak, she tied it carelessly around her neck, saying:

"Now, Carro, I am ready. I will go into the drawing-room and play over that new song till you come down."

"Oh, Rose! how quickly you do dress. I am not near ready yet. Please send Aimy to me. I want her to dress my hair."

Rose crossed to the servants' hall, and sending Aimy to the tiny sprite who could not robe her dainty limbs under an hour's time, she passed into the drawing-room. The room lay in shadow, lighted only from the hall. Rose sat down to the piano.

Her song was mournfully sad, then the rich voice surged through the lofty rooms, appealingly, almost wailingly.

Poor Rose, her heart caught the trick of the song's sadness, and her head sank upon the instrument, while bright tears fell upon the rich dress.

Ere she was aware, a voice thrillingly low was whispering, "Rose, darling!" and passing his arm around her, the proud head was laid upon the breast of Ernest Clare, and the sweet, tear-stained face pressed against his own.

Rose sought to free herself from his embrace, though her heart thrilled at the sound of the loved voice, as does a harp-string when too rudely touched.

He led her into the hall under the brilliant gas-light, and gazed sadly upon the drooping head and snowy brow, murmuring:

"Rose, you are peerlessly beautiful to-night."

At this moment Carro came tripping down the stairs.

"I am happy to see you, Sir Knight of the eagle eye. Do I not look passing well, Lord Ernest? I mean to walk straight into the heart of Captain Acton to-night, so the Arlington had best look to herself, or her harp will yet be 'hung upon the willows.' But here is the carriage, let us to the banquet."

There was a baneful light in Rose Arlington's eyes, as the cousins entered the room leaning upon the arm of the handsome, regal-looking man she was trying to win from his allegiance. The glorious beauty of Rose Traverse was acknowledged by all.

A subdued murmur of admiration followed her wherever she moved. The heart of Ernest Clare was at rest; he felt that the eyes of Rose Arlington had lost their spell.

The "war of the roses" was like to end, our bright, crimson rose coming out victor—though we must confess the war was—as Carro said—all on the Arlington's side.

Will the war be at an end? Time will show. It is said that a "pair of bright eyes with a dozen glances suffice to subdue a man, to enslave him; they dazzle and bewilder him, so that the past becomes forgotten."

Ernest Clare was happier to-night than he

had been for many weeks; he determined to show Miss Arlington no attention; in very truth her eyes appeared to have lost their spell, overshadowed by the radiant beauty of our own bright Rose. But ah! who can compute the power that lies in curls of a golden hue, and eyes of melting softness?

The hand of Rose Traverse was claimed for a dance by a white-haired hero of many battles, General G—; one who admired her above all women, though his love for her was that of a father for his child.

Ernest stood watching the graceful movements and noble face of his boyhood's love, his manhood's idolatry, when a beautiful hand was laid upon his arm, and soft, dewy eyes looked sadly into his own.

"Have you forgotten my presence, Ernest? You have not sought me once to-night. Come, let us promenade, I have something to tell you," and the arm of the siren was linked within his own.

Once more busy tongues were whispering of his devotion to Miss Arlington, and sundry black, blue, and grey eyes were directed to the face of Rose Traverse.

But the pride of Rose suffered her to make no change in her demeanour. Her smile was sweet and calm as it ever was, and her step unflinching.

Again Rose and Carro were seated by the fire in the former's pleasant chamber. By mutual consent the name of Ernest Clare was not mentioned.

"You look weary and tired, Carro, and it's one o'clock; I think you had better retire."

"And you, Rose?"

"I shall write to-night; the spell is upon me, and I could not sleep."

"Oh, Rose dear! but I shall not waste words, my head aches dreadfully, so I will to bed—perchance I may dream of my brave captain," and laughing merrily she kissed her good-night.

A few moments and the pretty head was laid upon the pillow, a few more, and the white lids closed wearily over the eyes so like in hue to the blue bells and violets of her own dear home.

Without disrobing Rose unlocked the writing desk, and drew forth the unfinished manuscript; rapidly the pen travelled over the paper, and at last it was complete.

"And now for the promised sketch; what shall it be?" she soliloquised. "I must write it, though it be but half a column, for I have given my promise. Ah, me! how shall the aching head and weary heart improvise matter to please the multitude? I fear me it will be but a dreary plaint."

"Tis ever thus with earth's children. Like Rose, they must labour on, though the pain at their heart grows more unbearable; the anguished face must wear a smile, the lip must be ever gay, lest the cold world should see, and the 'lookers-on in Venice' comment.

Rose wrote the last word of the coveted sketch, sealed and directed it. Then she wrote a note to Ernest Clare, releasing him from his vows, and giving back his plighted troth. It was hard to give up the love of years, but she could not share a divided heart.

Throwing up the window she knelt beneath it, inhaling greedily the pure air, unmindful that the chill winter wind blew upon her uncovered neck.

The face wore a weary look, and in the deep eyes there slumbered a wondrous woe. She had vowed to forget Ernest—could she? Wherefore, after the vow was made, did the heart clamour for the loved presence—the gentle tones whose music lingered everywhere?

After a storm, whether of the elements or the human heart, there comes a calm. So it was with our mourner; the moonlight fell upon the bowed head and the rich dress, and the diamonds flashed back a mocking light beneath the rays.

Rose, listening to the wind anthem, felt a calm descend upon her soul; upon the wings of

the wind came floating the sweet promises of Him whom, in her sorrows, she had forgotten. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The last months of winter passed wearily away. To Rose it seemed interminable. All was at an end between Ernest Clare and herself; henceforth their path led down a different current. Rose was content to have it so; though the rich crimson of her cheek was fading, and her bounding step grew slow and weary, yet she moved through her home cheerfully as of old.

In those happy days, when she knew herself beloved, there were blissful hours spent in dreaming; now she must keep herself busily employed, lest the sorrow at her heart should rise up and clamour to be heard.

Twice had letters come from Ernest Clare filled with sorrow, renewing the vows so lately broken, and pleading for the love he had so cruelly slighted; but Rose was firm; she could not risk this great sorrow a second time, lest her happiness should be shipwrecked for evermore.

"Rose! Rose!" cried out Carro, one evening, "do come out upon the colonnade—George is waiting to tell you something. Oh, there is something so nice going to happen to-morrow."

Rose passed her arm around Carro, and the two went out to where the brother and—shall we perch?—the lover stood waiting. It was a lovely evening, and though the sweet sunset glow had faded, the earth and the sky were beautiful; surely the evening breeze must have been kissing the flowers so fragrant and heavy-laden with sweets; it came lightening the load pressing the heart of Rose, and fluttering the curls on Carro's sunny brow.

"Well, my brother, what is this great treat Carro says you have in store for us? I am all curiosity."

"Why, sister, we are going to have a riding party to the 'cliffs' to-morrow. We start as soon as the sun is up, and stay till evening, take our dinner in the woods, and our tea at the famous sign of 'The Golden Star.' You can ride with Carro and me. You will go for my sake, sister?"

George Traverse drew his sister's head upon his breast, and fondly kissed the white brow.

"Yes, George, I will accompany you."

"Ah, Rose, that is well; now I am content. Come hither, little one—don't be jealous. I have room enough in my other arm to encircle your tiny waist."

"Don't trouble yourself, Mr. Impudence; I am not anxious to have your arm about my waist."

"Then you shall, whether or not," and suiting the action to the word, he flew after the laughing Carro, and soon captured her, pressing a lover's kiss upon the dewy lips.

Rose stood watching the lovers. They were quiet enough now; Carro, with the arm she had a few moments ago so saucily refused, thrown around her. The fluttering heart was stilled now, listening to the low, manly voice whose music thrilled her soul. With a deep sigh Rose entered the house, and the lovers stood in the gloaming till the stars came out.

"What kind of a day is it, Viney? Will it be pleasant for our ride?" spoke Rose Arlington to her maid.

"Beautiful day, Miss Rose; splendiferous for your ride."

"Hasten, then, Viney, and bring my breakfast whilst I curl my hair." The proud beauty placed herself before the mirror, and thus soliloquised: "I must look my best to-day, for I do believe Ernest Clare is growing weary of me, and mamma writes that funds are low; so I must try and bring my wealthy lover to the point this day. I believe he loves that haughty Rose Traverse yet. Well, I shall make my last great effort to-day. If he hears I think of leaving for home, perhaps he may propose. I think

the gentlemen in mamma's native country are very cold of heart, or I should have won Ernest ere now."

"Throw up the window, Rose, and tell me of the sky. If it is a beautiful blue, and we can have our ride, I shall get up; if not, I shall stay in bed and have the pouts."

"It is a glorious morning, Carro. You had better mount, and prepare for your ride to the far-famed 'Cliffs.' I feel almost happy this morning, darling; the very wind seems to bear upon its wings something exhilarating and life-giving."

And well she might be happy, our sweet Rose. The morn was beautiful—one of those bright mornings in early June, the sweetest season in all the year, where summer's fairy sister, spring, bath so lately rested, leaving even yet her breath among the flowers.

Carro stood arranging her silken curls, as George loved to see them. When the riding-dress was donned, and the coquettish cap of dark blue velvet laid upon the sunny curls, the little maid looked wondrous winsome. So thought George Traverse, for as she descended the stairs he met her, and drawing the little hand through his arm, he whispered:

"You are, radiant this morning, and you are mine—mine."

Though pearly tears trembled upon the long ashes as the caressing tones fell from his lips, the little gipsy would not be entirely subdued.

"Excuse me, George Traverse, I am my own, not yours yet; and if you don't quit ruffling my hair, I shall be mine for ever."

Something closed the wee mouth. I wonder what it was.

As Rose made her appearance at the door, a portion of the party swept by on their journey to the "Cliffs," among whom were Rose Arlington and Ernest Clare. The former drew up before the door for the purpose of letting her rival see who was her companion.

She made a bad move by thus doing; for this morning Rose Traverse was gloriously beautiful. Ernest Clare felt it, and his heart throbbed tempestuously.

Queenly Rose Traverse, thou art now avenged; for, as in the first days of thy love, so now the heart of thy lover is thine—thy lightest footfall or the tones of thy voice fill his soul with wild emotion.

Rose stood upon the marble steps waiting for her brother.

Her riding-dress was black, and the graceful cap of black velvet was singularly becoming, with its long, drooping plumes waving above the white brow.

Ernest gazed upon the noble face, and read there nothing; true, he could see the traces of a battle fought and won, but nought he wished to see.

The proud, beautiful lips quivered not; could it be that upon those lips his kiss of betrothal had been pressed!

His very lips grew pale; his life seemed like a helmless ship, under the angry sea—all was lost, and he would have perilled much to regain the love he had slighted.

There was anguish in his heart and on his face, as he turned to Miss Arlington, and proposed riding onward.

Could the proud beauty have read his heart, her face would have quickly lost its wreath of smiles. But the end was not yet.

Merry songs and ringing laughter resounded all day long through the old woods beneath the "Cliffs," and, if sadness dwelt in one or two young hearts, none heeded it; for the sweet lip of Rose wore the olden smile, and it is not given to mortals to read the heart. Mother Belton, the merry hostess of "The Golden Star," laid before them a repast that would have tempted an anchorite, much less a happy, hungry crew like her guests.

All too soon evening came, and the old Sol grew drowsy, and prepared for going to rest behind the blue hills.

The gay cavalcade were soon mounted and

moving toward the city; some few of the weary equestrians as glad as their "bonnie steeds" to turn their faces homeward.

Several times during the day Ernest had shown some courtesy to Rose, which she accepted politely and calmly; so calm indeed was her manner, that it froze the words of entreaty trembling upon her lover's lips.

He rode by the side of Miss Arlington sad and still—so still that the fair Arlington wondered, and pouted, and smiled by turns. How could he smile and jest when his heart was shrouded in gloom?

He was near the idol of his heart, could hear her sweet, low voice, and yet he dare not seek her side.

They were already in sight of her home, and soon even the solace of her sweet presence would be lost to him.

At this moment one of the lingering couple came dashing by in a race; recklessly they rode, and in passing struck the horse of Ernest Clare, who reared and sprang to one side, throwing his ungarded rider upon a pile of sharp stones by the wayside.

He lay perfectly still, with the crimson blood flowing from his temples. Fortunately they were near the house of Mrs. Traverse, where he was immediately carried.

Rose Arlington screamed—a pretty little scream—and if she could have had a pair of lordly arms to support her, would have fainted; as it was, she said the sight of blood always made her ill, and rode onward alone. A physician was called, and an examination took place.

"Oh, Heaven, let him not die!" broke from the pallid lips of Rose Traverse. "Is he dead, doctor? Oh, tell me the truth!"

No, not dead, I hope, but bruised and dreadfully injured. I fear for the result, Miss Rose."

Forgetful of the past, poor Rose bent over the prostrate form; she drew the dear and noble head close to her heart, and pressed her lips to the marred and bleeding brow.

"Speak to me, Ernest—speak but one word!"

Her voice must have had power to reach the heart whose pulses beat so feebly, for the heavy eyes unclosed and wandered about the room; then, as memory returned, he comprehended all. A look of wild joy flashed over his face as he saw Rose, and, raising his unwounded arm, he laid his hand upon the bright head.

"Heaven bless you, my darling. I do not feel my sufferings now."

His arm was broken, and many internal injuries were discovered. Rose held his hand whilst the arm was set, pale, but firm—wiping the dew of suffering from the loved brow.

Long he lay in that shaded room, even till summer had grown toward its noon. Need we say that past sorrows were forgotten, or that the broken vows were renewed?

'Tis a month since the fated riding party returned so sadly. Ernest Clare has grown strong again, under the watchful care of his friends. Very beautiful was our Rose this summer's eve in her pure white dress, with blue and white violets twined among her glossy curls. A heavy gold ring is upon her slender finger, which tells a tale of happiness to come.

"You leave us to-morrow, Ernest? I shall miss you sadly."

And her voice grew tremulous with feeling. "Yes, my darling; but soon I shall call you my own; then we will part no more for ever."

Reader, the "War of the Roses" is ended. Our Rose is the victor, and Carro is happy. The Arlington has returned to her home in disgust. It is whispered that when the leaves fall, a double wedding will come off in the old Traverse mansion.

J. H. B.

KISSING the baby may result in deforming its nose, and bringing on near-sightedness. The safest plan is not to kiss a baby of the feminine persuasion until it attains the age of sixteen years. The cartilage of the nose is much stronger then.

## LEARNING TO SPELL.

Almost everyone has observed that there is no surer way to learn how to spell a word than by writing it. For this reason, a child learning how to spell should be provided with slips of paper large enough to contain one word each. Require him to write down on them a certain number of words each day—thinking up the words himself. At first he will have little difficulty in writing out a sufficient number. Boy, man, chair, book, table, dog, and others will readily occur to him. See that he writes them down correctly, and each day make him spell over the words of preceding days, or such of them as he is liable to forget how to spell.

With a thread or rubber band let him do up the slips in a bundle in alphabetical order, and then it can be seen that he does not write down one day's words which he has written before. Soon his stock of very common words will approach exhaustion, and then he will be a little puzzled to furnish his tale of bricks. By listening to conversation and from other sources he will pick up less common words, like romantic, agriculture and gloom. He should be required to explain with tolerable clearness what these mean. Obligated now to exert himself to find words, he is continually adding to his own vocabulary; gathering words which he will be able to use in his own conversation and writings.

Thus he may go on until he has made a spelling-book which will be more useful to him than any he can otherwise procure.

## ZULULAND.

SEVERAL new versions of last year's popular street song have appeared. One commences:—

"We don't want to fight, but by Jingo  
when we do,  
We'll be more wide awake than when  
we met the bad Zulu."

A Radical version is:

"We did want to fight, but by Jingo at  
Zulu,  
We lost our men, we lost our guns, and  
we lost our money too."

The song for the avenging army is:—

"We're eager for the fight, but by Jingo  
when we do,  
We'll kill for every white man slain, a  
hundred black Zulu."

## FACETIE.

DISCUSSING AN ABSENT FRIEND.

"Yes, Robinson's a clever feller; and he's a modest feller, and he's a honest feller; but, betwixt you and I and the post, Mr. Jones," said Brown, confidentially, picking his wisdom tooth with his little finger nail, "Robinson ain't got neither the looks, nor yet the language, nor yet the manners of a gentleman!"

"Right you are, sir!" said Jones, shovelling the melted remains of his ice pudding into his mouth with a steel knife (which he afterwards wiped on the tablecloth). "You're 'it 'im off to a T!"

—Punch.

At the complimentary banquet given in honour of Lord Dufferin the other day, the noble Earl, at the conclusion of his speech, proposed "The Health of the Reform Club." Indeed! I suppose the next thing we hear of will be the health of a railway station.

—Funny Folks.

A PRIZE WINN(OW)ER.

It seems that Mr. J. L. Toole actually won a prize in the Paris Lottery, and, strange to say,



it was a winnowing machine. Introduced into his next comedy, he will, with its aid, be able to evolve more "chaff" than ever!

—Funny Folks.

#### CETEWAYO THE USURPER.

(From a Fashionable Standpoint.)

SHE was a shop-window beauty—a photographer's pet—a charmer of the camera; and though her likeness was frequently but a negative delight, her life was a positive pleasure, for she basked in the rays of popularity.

But one morning she was taken with a fit of melancholy. Her husband observed it. She had, as he well knew, been previously taken with a beefsteak hat, taken with a bird, and taken with a parasol. In order to comfort her he now took her hand—a very pretty one—which would have gained even the admiration of the fastidious Louis Carté-ozze, and exclaimed:

"Oh, confide in me, beloved one! Pour all your grief into my bosom. A husband's bosom especially lends itself to such uses. Tell me everything, my more precious than silver-Bath-sheba!"

"My heart is very heavy, love," she replied. "Could you but see it, you would call 'Londyun'!"

Such are the aberrations of grief. She meant collodion.

"Not I, of all bu-men, if I thought 'twould add to your distress. Tell me your cause of sorrow, my sweet one, s'il vous dry-plate," he implored, speaking French with an English accent in his agitation.

She yielded.

"I mourn," she sobbed, "because last week the dreadful burglar person sold two hundred more than I did, and—and this week that quite too awfully ferocious-looking Cetewayo is going off better than either of us!"

—Funny Folks.

#### HOW'S THAT, ABUDU?

A "RISE in the East" which no army can put down—the sunrise.

—Funny Folks.

#### COMPENSATION.

THE King of the Zulus will not allow his soldiers to marry until they are forty years of age; but, as they are all warriors, he does not forbid long engagements.

—Funny Folks.

#### "LIVING JEWELLERY."

An anxious look was in her eye—

She wriggled in her seat—

Nor seemed to heed the well-born youth

Who pleaded at her feet.

"Be mine! he sighed; "believe me, love,

On you I set such store!"—

She did not sweetly ask him "Why?"

But wriggled more and more.

"You hear me, don't you, ownest own?"

Say, when shall we be wed?"

She rose, and writhing as she stood,

"It tickles so," she said.

"Good heavens! darling, what's amiss?"

Do pains my poppet rack?"

"My living locket," she replied.

"Is crawling down my back?"

—Funny Folks.

#### ANTIQUE IMPROMPTU.

SAITH Jacke, "Forsooth, Will shnoeth loud and despo!"

"Sheweth," quoth Bobbe, "that he is sound asleep."—Funny Folks.

#### CURIOS!

AMONGST people of property in France a woman is not considered suitable for marriage until she has attained her dot-age.

SPENDTHRIFT.—If you won't live within your income, you'll soon have to live without it.

—Funny Folks.

#### LOOMING IN THE FUTURE.

THE Manchester and Blackburn cotton goods

merchants are still discussing the capabilities of Central Africa as a market for their manufactures. In their eagerness to supply the equatorial regions with cotton garments, they would turn the very Equator itself into a clothes-line."

—Funny Folks.

#### NATURAL INQUIRY.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer acknowledges receipt of the first halves of two £100 notes for income-tax from "A. R. R. Ears."

Are ears (arrear) long? —Funny Folks.

#### APT.

LINE for those employers who lament the emigration of skilled workmen to America, &c.:

"Oh, for the touch of the vanished hand."

—Funny Folks.

#### ANOTHER ATROCITY.

OLD LADY: "Ah, you bad boy, draggin' your little brother along like that! S'posin' you was to kill him?"

BAD BOY: "Gah! Don't care. Got another indoors!"

—Funny Folks.

#### LYRIC.

THE cowslips here spring from under the sod.

The violet throws up her scent to God;

All the flowers of May, so lovely and gay,

Have come with the spring-tide out to play;

The small birds hop on the hawthorn boughs,

And tell to each other their tender vows;

The ring-dove calls to his gentle mate,

And all the air is with joy elate;

But my love, he comes not again to me,

He has gone to the wars beyond the sea!

I sit with my baby upon my breast,  
And my darling sinks to his gentle rest;  
And from tender strains remembered long,  
I have strung the chords of a loving song;  
Yet the breezes give back only a moan,  
And the winds re-echo its plaintive tone!  
My heart is sad, though the world is clad  
In her gala robes, so bright and glad;  
For my love, he comes not back to me,  
He went to the wars far beyond the sea.

But I dreamt last night that an angel bright,

His wings all aglow with a mystic light,

Had come from the land that "eye cannot see,"

To watch by the side of baby and me.

And my dear one spoke to my throbbing heart,

And swore that in Heaven we shall not part;

And his hand I clasp'd as in days of old,

And I told him the tale I'd so often told;

And I know there will be a home for me,

In the land where it's said there is no more sea.

C. S.

#### GEMS.

MAN is ever selfish, ever solely regardful of his own gratification; glossing over the crimes that administer to his pleasures, and condemning them with unmitigated severity when they have ceased to be desirable.

FALSEHOOD flies swift as the wind, and truth creeps behind her at a snail's pace. But falsehood makes so many twistings, that truth, keeping steadily on, looking neither to the right nor the left, overtakes her before long.

We should always distinguish between taste and fancy. One is a perception of some manifestation of a principle in nature, the other a mere predilection for works of war. One is founded on the soul as seen through its outward covering, the other contemplates only the exterior dress.

True taste is a love of the sublime, the beautiful and the true.

"I HAVE no time to devote to my children," says the business man, with a sigh; for he really feels the privation of their society keenly. But the excuse is an insufficient one; he should make time—let other things go; for no duty is more important than he owes his offspring.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

RICE PUDDING.—Wash one ounce of the finest rice, put it in a pie dish with half a pint of beef tea or any kind of broth. Bake until the rice is well cooked; it will take about an hour in a moderate oven. Boil a quarter of a pint of milk, pour it on to an egg lightly beaten, stir well together, and then mix with the rice. Season with salt, and, if allowed, a little pepper. Put the pudding into the pie dish, bake very slowly for an hour and a half, and serve.

MACCARONI PUDDING.—Break one-half ounce of best Italian macaroni into half a pint of veal broth or weak beef tea, and let it boil for an hour, or until well swelled and perfectly tender. Make a custard as for savoury rice pudding, put it with the macaroni into a tart dish, season to taste, and bake gently for an hour and a half.

SAVOURY BREAD PUDDING.—Pour half a pint of beef tea, boiling, over the crumb of a French roll. Beat well together, and let it soak for half an hour; then add two eggs beaten with a quarter of a pint of boiling milk. Season with pepper and salt, beat together for five minutes, put the pudding into a buttered tart dish, and bake rather quickly for three-quarters of an hour. If there is no objection, an onion well boiled and beaten to a pulp may be added to the pudding.

MACCARONI CHEESE.—This is macaroni flavoured with cheese, and may be eaten without risk by most invalids. Scrape two ounces of good-flavoured, rich, new cheese into half a pint of cold water, let it boil gently for half an hour, strain out the cheese, and put to the liquid half an ounce of best Italian macaroni broken in small pieces, a bit of butter the size of small walnuts, a pinch of pepper, and salt if necessary. Let the macaroni simmer gently until perfectly tender, when it will have absorbed all the liquid; then beat up the yolk of an egg with a teaspoonful of milk or cream; stir briskly into the macaroni until it is lightly set, and assumes the appearance of cheese; serve immediately.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

Two thousand metres of carbon rod a day are being made by a prominent manufacturer in Paris, in consequence of the increased demand for the use in electric lights.

HIS MAJESTY has herself expressed a desire that the services of Lieutenants Chard and Bromhead at Rorke's Drift may be fittingly recognised. They are to receive the Victoria Cross, and will both be made C.B.'s, and granted their brevet majority.

AN INCIDENT OF WAR.—The following is an extract from a private letter from Maritzburg, descriptive of the disastrous encounter with the Zulus on January 22:—"An old man (owner of some of the waggons) concealed himself amongst the packages in one of his waggons and saw the fight. He describes the desperate way our men fought back to back till they were assailed. He says that a sailor drew his cutlass, rushed among the Zulus, and killed five before a man crept behind him and stabbed him."

Nor all the gold of the world could purchase one moment's peace of conscience, nor all the combined work of the world, both natural and artificial, buy eternal rest; yet their price is within the reach of the poorest and meanest, for a simple act of faith will purchase both.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NOTICE.—Parties requiring the addresses of correspondents should write to Mr. Hartwell, Chatham Road, Wandsworth, London, S.W.

J. H.—1. The 5th of April, 1880, fell on a Tuesday. 2. You would be of medium height. 3. Attention to cleanliness and a little blood-purifying medicine will remove the scurf.

A YOUNG WIFE.—Enclose 5s. 6d. in stamps to Mr. Stanley, 11, Gordon Grove, Brixton, London, who will forward you the work.

GEORGE W.—As you omit to state your age and place of residence we cannot give you specific answers to your questions. Perhaps if you should take some favourable occasion and make a confidante of some mother she might be able either to give you the needed advice herself, or else refer you to some friend in whose judgment you could trust.

W. D.—See answer to "A Young Wife."

ADA.—The falling out of your hair was probably owing to a decrease of vitality in your system, and the same cause may occasion its present condition. Consult your physician.

ISABEL.—There are many instruction books on learning to play the organ. Whenever you go to town call at a music shop and inquire for them. On looking over them you will have a notion as to which of them you can understand the most readily, and that will be the one for you to buy.

SCHOOLGIRL.—1. Paper was first made, in so far as we have evidence, of linen rags in 1177. Cotton and other materials were used much earlier. 2. Whales do not swallow dead bodies. They have no teeth, and rarely swallow anything larger than a herring.

E. G. P.—It is not absolutely necessary to live in the parish; but when applying at the registry office you must give an address where both parties can be found in the parish.

S. L.—Your case, if as described, is only another "beerhouse swindle" to entrap simple people. Send us full name and address, and we will advise you further. In the meantime, don't give up key license. The landlord must, the lease not being signed, give you six months notice from June next.

J. P.—Write to Mr. Stanley, 11, Gordon Grove, Brixton, London, and enclose 5s. in stamps. He will supply you with the information required.

FORGIVEN.—The poem you refer to is written by Alfred Tennyson.

T. B.—Without pronouncing on his conduct in your statement, which, conceivably, a word from him would modify, we recommend you not to go out of your way either to cultivate him on the one hand, or to mark your feeling by refusing to recognise him on the other. Let him come and go. To "cut" him would give him the impression that you were deeply hurt and had missed him greatly. Not to "notice things" is often wise and comfortable.

EMERSEY.—We never undertake what is a lawyer's business, and especially in a case like yours. We recommend you to try the divorce only when you have exhausted all means of reconciliation. We advise you to give the poor girl, in this instance, at least an opportunity of stating her case and settling herself right. Unless she has sinned otherwise, you will probably regret the day you got the divorce.

W. T. H. (Cornwall).—Send a P.O.O. for £3 10s. to Mr. Hart, 18, Bengerly Road, Wandsworth, London, S.W., who will get you full value for money. Give him full particulars of what you require.

CAROL.—You will do wisely to tell the young man that while your feelings towards him are unchanged, on reflection you feel that you ought to acquaint your parents. He will then, no doubt, aid you in the proper steps towards the obtaining of their consent to your engagement.

ALFRED.—We are not able to pronounce on the standing of the concern in question. The fact of a business being advertised in *The London Reader* now proves nothing. Indeed, it appears to be the policy of "bogus concerns" to get into "religious" sheets, and so procure what the very simple-minded count a kind of endorsement.

IN OUR NEXT NUMBER WILL BE COMMENCED A NEW STORY, ENTITLED,  
"LORD JASPER'S SECRET; OR, BETWEEN PALACE AND PRISON,"  
BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS."

RUH, eighteen, fond of home, tall, thoroughly domesticated, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two.

E. W. O., twenty-one, light hair, hazel eyes, fond of home and children, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady about his own age.

G. D. and C. A. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. G. D. is twenty-one, dark hair, blue eyes. C. A. S. is nineteen, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

LILLIE and VIOLET, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Lillie is fair, light brown hair, dark blue eyes, medium height, fond of music. Violet is fair, good-looking, call, fond of home and children.

LOVING POLLIE, seventeen, brown hair, blue eyes, fair, fond of home, would like to correspond with a minister with a view to matrimony.

J. H., twenty, dark, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age, fond of home.

FRED and HARRY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Fred is twenty, medium height, fond of music. Harry is twenty, of a loving disposition, good-looking.

J. R. M. and J. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. J. R. M. is twenty-six, medium height, brown eyes, good-looking. J. S. is twenty-two, tall, auburn hair, dark blue eyes, good-looking.

B. H. W., twenty, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen.

## OUR ABSENT ONE.

He was all our hearts could wish him,  
Noble in each thought and deed,  
Loving all that's worth the loving,  
Aiding all that aiding need,  
And when danger from us took him  
Every heart wished him God-speed.

Duty to his country called him  
Quickly from his home away;  
In each eye the tearful glances,  
Dreary was and sad the day,  
Scarcely plucking up our spirits  
To smile and cheer him on his way.

Yes, he sailed where duty called him,  
Self-reliant as of old,  
And his proud and manly bearing  
(Dearest to our hearts than gold),  
Kept him ever in remembrance,  
Ne'er to slumber or grow cold.

As our prayers were for his safety  
Rendered to the throne above,  
Daily in our deep devotion,  
Never wavering in our love,  
That he might in some bright future  
Return as did the faithful dove.

When hopes dreams shall nightly fold us,  
And sweet peace smite our anse,  
We shall see his dear eyes shining,  
As the heavens tranquil blue,  
Once more on the loved ones round him,  
In his manhood good and true.

Yet should his heavenly Father call him  
Our love will not be kept in vain;  
He will nobly do his duty,  
And the laurel he will gain  
Is a place 'mid true hearts dwelling  
In the home that knows no pain. O. P.

ROSE and KATE, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Rose is twenty-one, fair, medium height, loving, fond of home. Kate is twenty, domesticated, fond of home and children, fair.

A. D. and G. P., two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen. A. D. is twenty-four, good-tempered, fond of home, of a loving disposition. G. P. is twenty, fair, medium height.

BELLA S., medium height, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young man. Respondent must be about twenty-five.

TILLY, twenty-two, dark hair and eyes, fond of home, dark, good-looking, medium height, would like to correspond with a young gentleman. Respondent must be twenty-three, fond of home and children, dark, good-looking.

ALICE and CLARA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Alice is twenty, dark, fond of home and children. Clara is fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

E. A. and O. B., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. E. A. is twenty-three, medium height. O. B. is twenty, tall. Respondents must be fond of music and dancing, good-looking.

PAULINE, IONE, and POLLIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Pauline and Ione have dark hair, brown eyes. Pollie is twenty-one, curly hair, blue eyes.

BLANCHE, twenty, auburn hair, grey eyes, fair, good-looking, of a loving disposition, and fond of home, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about the same age.

L. L., eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondents must be about seventeen, domesticated, brown hair, blue eyes, dark.

P. C. and B. T., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. P. C. is twenty-four, dark, handsome. B. T. is good-tempered, fair, blue eyes.

LAURA, eighteen, medium height, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-one, tall, of a loving disposition, good-looking.

WILL W., twenty-one, dark brown hair and eyes, tall, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Must be nineteen, fond of home and children.

I. W., eighteen, brown hair, dark blue eyes, medium height, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-one, dark.

G. T., eighteen, tall, dark, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home, light hair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-one, of a loving disposition.

G. G. and D. P., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony between twenty and twenty-three. G. G. is twenty-one, medium height, fond of home and children, dark hair and eyes. D. P. is twenty-five, dark, dark hair, hazel eyes, medium height.

CLARA, twenty-four, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age, dark, good-looking.

M. S., twenty, dark, of a loving disposition, domesticated, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two, good-tempered.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ROSE is responded to by—P. J.  
CONFIDENCE by—A Lonely One, thirty, domesticated, fond of home.

SARAH W. by—Doubtless Shell, good-looking, fond of home.

GWYNETH H. by—Dips.

ANNIE H. by—Lack-a-Corps, fair, fond of home and children.

TILLY by—Amy, twenty-two, light brown hair, blue eyes, loving, fond of home.

CYRIL by—Mary E. A., eighteen, dark brown hair and eyes.

S. M. by—Little Emily, medium height, good-looking, fond of home.

R. D. by—Fanny, tall, good-looking, thoroughly domesticated.

FANNY by—C. F., twenty-two, of a loving disposition, dark, tall.

COMPASS by—Kitty, twenty-eight, dark hair and eyes, tall.

ALBERT by—Marian H., seventeen, brown hair, hazel eyes, loving.

FRED by—Mabel, twenty, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, dark.

MARTIN by—Ellen, twenty-four, dark, fond of home and children.

RICHARD by—Jessie, nineteen, good-tempered.

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